

Wednesday November 27 1996

- Abu Dhabi D 6.50, Albania L 2.20, Andorra P 1.70, Australia A 3.30, Austria A 3.30, Bahrain B 0.85, Bangladesh B 0.85, Belgium B 0.85, Brazil B 0.85, Canada C 1.25, Cayman C 1.00, Czech C 1.00, Denmark D 1.50, Estonia E 1.50, Finland F 1.50, France F 1.50, Germany G 1.50, Greece G 1.50, Hong Kong H 1.50, Hungary H 1.50, India I 1.50, Ireland I 1.50, Italy I 1.50, Japan J 1.50, Korea K 1.50, Kuwait K 1.50, Lebanon L 1.50, Luxembourg L 1.50, Malaysia M 1.50, Mexico M 1.50, Netherlands N 1.50, New Zealand N 1.50, Norway N 1.50, Oman O 1.50, Pakistan P 1.50, Poland P 1.50, Portugal P 1.50, Qatar Q 1.50, Saudi Arabia S 1.50, Singapore S 1.50, South Africa S 1.50, Spain S 1.50, Sweden S 1.50, Switzerland S 1.50, Taiwan T 1.50, Thailand T 1.50, Turkey T 1.50, USA US 2.75

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The enigmatic rock icon

Bowie at 50

G2 with...

Inside story

The Discontinuity of the Labour Party

By...



Society

The Disability Act: Legalised apartheid?

By...

Inside: Budget special

The Tories' last card

Clarke gambles on tax cuts and growth to deliver election victory

Larry Elliott and Michael White

KENNETH Clarke yesterday turned the leakiest Budget on record into one of the most cautious in the history of electioneering, banking on strong economic growth and a modest 1p tax cut to deliver the Conservatives a fifth election victory next spring.

With one eye on the City, the Chancellor trimmed public spending, pledged to hit the Government's 2.5 per cent inflation target, and invited voters to trust the Tories to deliver steady prosperity into the new millennium.

Playing the Tories' last card before the election, Mr Clarke's package was designed to appeal to the swing voters of Middle England. It cut the basic rate of income tax to 23p in the pound, increased the value of tax allowances and raised spending on health and education while supporting married couples

crisis engulf's whichever party wins the election.

The City was already starting to express deep scepticism about some of the Chancellor's arithmetic last night, fearing that the cuts in spending are based on heroic assumptions for inflation and the proposed attack on social security fraud. Even so, bookmakers last night cut the price against a Conservative victory from 7/4 to 6/4, with Labour moving out from 2/5 to 4/11 as the two parties began to trade blows on the Government's tax record.

Tories said average families will be £1,100 better off after tax and inflation than before the last election; Labour says they are paying £1,120 more in taxes, and that the reality of Mr Clarke's "extra" funds for health, education and the police is that cuts are looming despite sharp rises in council tax.

An analysis for the Guardian by Coopers & Lybrand indicated that a single person on £20,000 a year will be £5 a month better off after all the Budget tax changes are taken into account.

The Chancellor's caution, in delivering a minimalist Budget that had been trailed for weeks and leaked on an unprecedented scale 24 hours in advance, was offset by a bravura 75-minute Commons performance. Mr Clarke said he was "neither Santa Claus nor Scrooge", but his fourth Budget was derided by Tony Blair as a "last-gasp Budget of the government whose time is up". The Shadow Chancellor, Gordon Brown, announced that Labour would not vote against the 1p cut in income tax, though the Liberal Democrats said they would.

Amid general satisfaction among Conservative MPs, friends of John Redwood warned it was an opportunity missed - a deflationary "Budget for Maastricht" which was trimming spending and borrowing solely to keep open Mr Clarke's personal hope that sterling could qualify to enter the EU's single currency.

But Government spin doctors countered Labour's charges of "22 new taxes since 1992" with a new slogan of their own: "22 tax increases, now 25 tax cuts".

Mr Clarke closed with a candid explanation for his strategy: "I am a man of the world. I realise virtue doesn't always bring its own rewards. But this virtuous Budget will bring rich rewards, the rewards of economic success to the hard-working men and women of this country. Never forget, good economics is good politics."

In confirming the £2.2 billion package of tax cuts across a range of goods and income - including 26p



off a bottle of spirits - Mr Clarke also revealed tax increases officially put at £1.5 billion - including 10p on 20 cigarettes, 3p on a litre of petrol, and the phasing out of tax relief on profit-related bonuses for 3 million employees.

Most Tory MPs, even Mr Clarke's critics, accepted that voters and the City would not be impressed by a give-away performance. But some right-wing Tories fear that inflation will surge above Mr Clarke's 2.5 per cent forecasts before election day.

"The Budget wasn't exciting. It wasn't meant to be. Excitement would have been a form of betrayal. It was meant to say that economics is a tricky business and we know how to do it. That's a formidable message." Hugo Young, Page 7

Main points

Taxation

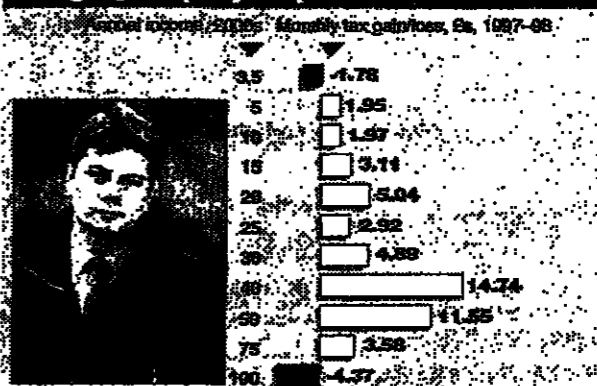
- Oxy penny cut in the basic rate of income tax, from 24p to 23p.
• Lower 20p tax band raised by £200 to £4,100.
• Threshold for higher rate tax of 40%, up £300 to £25,100.
• Petrol and diesel up 3p a litre - about 13.5p per gallon - from 6pm last night.
• Car tax up £5 to £145.
• Fillesou prices on pack of 20 cigarettes, 70 for pack of small cigars and about 6p on pipe tobacco.
• Alcopops to face 40% increase in tax - 7p to 8p a bottle - from January.
• Beer and wine unchanged for second year running.
• Spirits duty cut from 6pm by 4% to 25p a bottle.
• Inheritance tax threshold raised to £215,000 - from £200,000.
• Insurance premium tax up from 2.5% to 4% from April 1997.
• Tax-free profit related pay to be phased out.

Spending and services

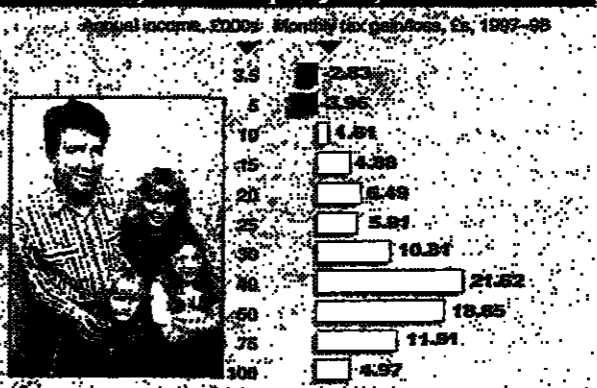
- Sale of £5bn worth of student loan debt.
• Spending on schools up by £250m next year.
• £200m for repairs of school buildings.
• £250m to boost further and higher education over next two years - including £20m for special needs equipment.
• Prescription charges up by 15 pence to £5.65.
• Spending on patient services to increase by £1.5bn.
• Overseas aid cut by 8.4%.
• Housing benefits cut for 250,000 single people.
• Abolition of special benefits for lone parents.
• £450m more for police/prisons.

What the tax changes mean to you

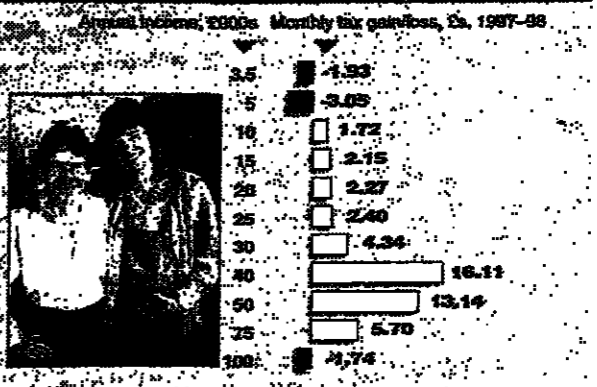
Single, employed person



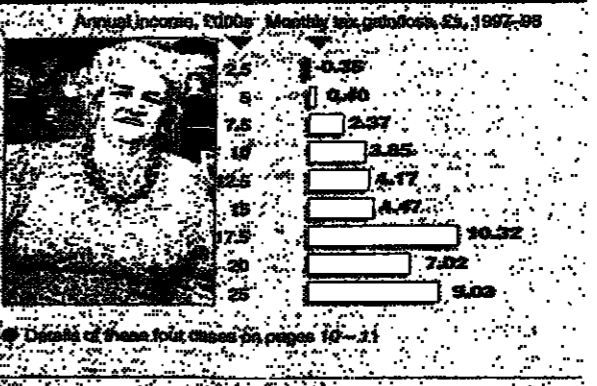
Married, self-employed, two children



Married, employed person



Single pensioner aged between 65 and 74



Freelance journalist 'was source of spectacular leak' to Mirror

Andrew Cuff and Ewan Macaskill

A FREELANCE journalist who specialises in investigative reporting was believed last night to have been the source of the unprecedented leak which upstaged Kenneth Clarke's Budget.

The Daily Mirror was understood to have obtained a bundle of secret documents the day before Mr Clarke's speech from a reporter with a record for spectacular scoops and exposés.

Workers are to be questioned at a south London print plant, part of the recently privatised Stationery

Office, where many staff have been told they face redundancy, and where Budget papers are normally printed.

The Mirror trumpeted its triumph in having obtained 50 per cent of the Budget's content, but did not reveal specific details.

The Government obtained an injunction, but editor Piers

Morgan claimed he had already decided not to disclose Mr Clarke's precise plans.

A spokesman at the freelance journalist's business address, in Covent Garden, London, said: "He is not in the office at the moment but we have been receiving lots of calls from people asking to speak to him. We cannot com-

ment on anything else but he is not likely to be around for the next couple of days."

The Mirror published its scoop without paying the source, although it is understood money would have changed hands if details from the documents had been used. Police were last night called into one of Whitehall's big-

How the Mirror cracked, page 3

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2 NEWS

Adams accuses Major of 'postponing opportunity for peace' by rebuffing last-chance proposals

IRA ceasefire plan rejected

David Sharrock
Ireland Correspondent
TIME was being called last night on the race to restore the IRA ceasefire when government sources and the Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, both said John Major had rejected last-chance proposals.

has not been persuaded, the Prime Minister told the Commons yesterday. "If there is any suggestion that terrorism will bring Sinn Fein to the negotiating table it emphatically will not."

Privately it is understood that Mr Major wrote to Mr Hume at the weekend telling him that the proposals do not square with current government policy.

The four-point plan calls for Sinn Fein's immediate entry into all-party talks without preconditions, a promise that the decommissioning of weaponry will not be allowed to impede the talks, and a time frame in which they will take place.

It also calls for confidence-building measures, such as the phased release of prisoners, to be implemented. Yesterday Mr Adams, who is understood to have seen Mr Major's response, said: "All the indications are that the British are not going to respond in an adequate way to the proposals put to them."

He added: "If what we are hearing is accurate then all they are doing is postponing the opportunity for peace. We will continue to try and move the situation forward."

BSE epidemic 'could be over by mid-1998'

Tom Stafford
Science Editor
BRITAIN may already have fulfilled its promises to Europe to cull cattle at risk from "mad cow disease", a leading scientist said yesterday.

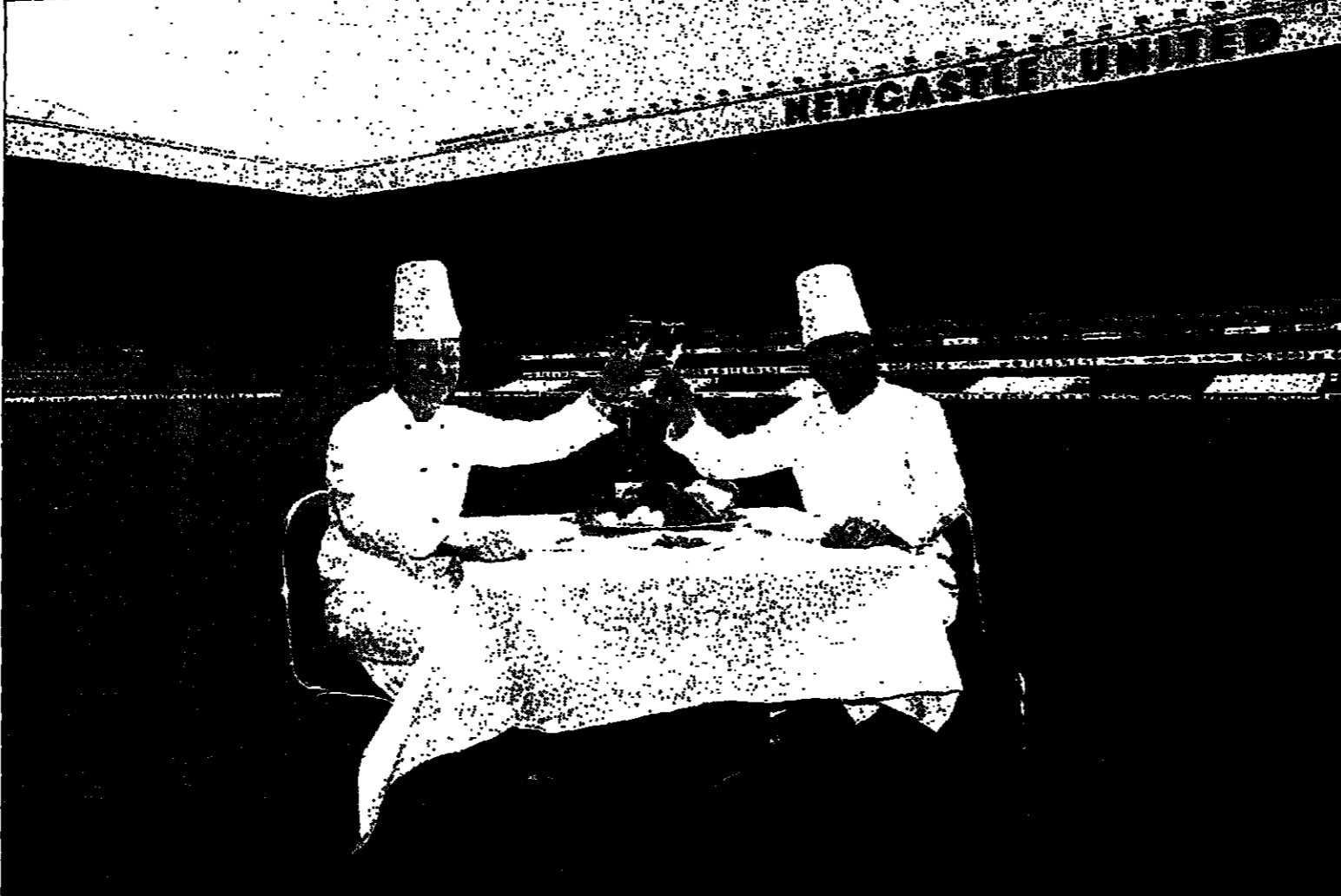
There may be just 150 cattle in Britain under 30 months old likely to develop the disease, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) — and the epidemic could be over by mid-1998.

But Professor Roy Anderson of Oxford said yesterday that there was no way of knowing for certain that Britain had already kept its side of the Florence Agreement — the "culling strategy" at the heart of a furious quarrel with Europe over the future of British beef.

One approach would be to breed animals resistant to scrapie. Since March, BSE has also been linked with a new form of CJD, a dementia with no known cure. The Lancet confirmed yesterday that members of the government-funded CJD Surveillance Unit in Edinburgh had submitted a paper proposing on the future course of the epidemic.



Cordon blanc et noir at soccer's Premier League tables



They think it's olive oil over... chef John Blackmore, right, and deputy Roger Payne; above left, manageress Deborah Mackay

Martin Wainwright
THE quails' eggs were enough to make anyone dribble and there was no way the pan-fried scallops of venison with plump blueberries could fail to score.

as lime parsley (served with fresh Craster smoked salmon noodles and roast monkfish, £12.75). And there was almost certainly something symbolic about the chopped-up bits of Man Utd-red side-salad dished up with my quail.

The airy restaurant, solid with 140 corporate guests at every home match, is the first Good Food Guide entry from the traditional world of lukewarm pies and dripping-soused chips.

The restaurant is only Newcastle's sixth entry in the guide, although the city's Kissel Cranachan at Cafe Procopce and foie gras with ham knuckle and pease pudding at 21 Queen St are praised.

restaurant in Alnwick, Northumberland, and posts in Park Lane, London, as well as Geneva and Berlin.

football fans can't have a bit of luxury for once instead of sipping their Bovril in the cold," said Mr Blackmore.

Good riddance to sentimental friend

Michael Billington
The Cherry Orchard
Albany Theatre
ADRIAN Noble's famous production of The Cherry Orchard was perfectly suited to Stratford-on-Avon's Swan Theatre.

OJ dismisses DNA evidence

Further holes picked in story as prosecution ends questioning
Christopher Reed
Los Angeles
THE intense prosecution questioning of O J Simpson in his civil murder trial ended yesterday, leaving America's most famous defendant down but not out.

Ex-MP in critical condition after car crash traps workmen

Sarah Besley
TED Leadbitter, the former Labour MP for Hartlepool, was in a critical condition in hospital last night after his car hit a road maintenance lorry, trapping three workmen collecting road cones.

while the workmen moved between them, collecting cones. Mr Leadbitter's car hit the back of the rear vehicle, a Leyland truck, and shunted it into the other, a Mercedes.

hospital yesterday. Police said Mr Leadbitter, the local MP for 28 years, suffered head, neck, pelvic and chest injuries. A spokeswoman for North Tees hospital said his condition was critical.

curled the wrath of the then Labour leader Neil Kinnock by buying shares in British Telecom and British Gas when party policy was against privatisation.

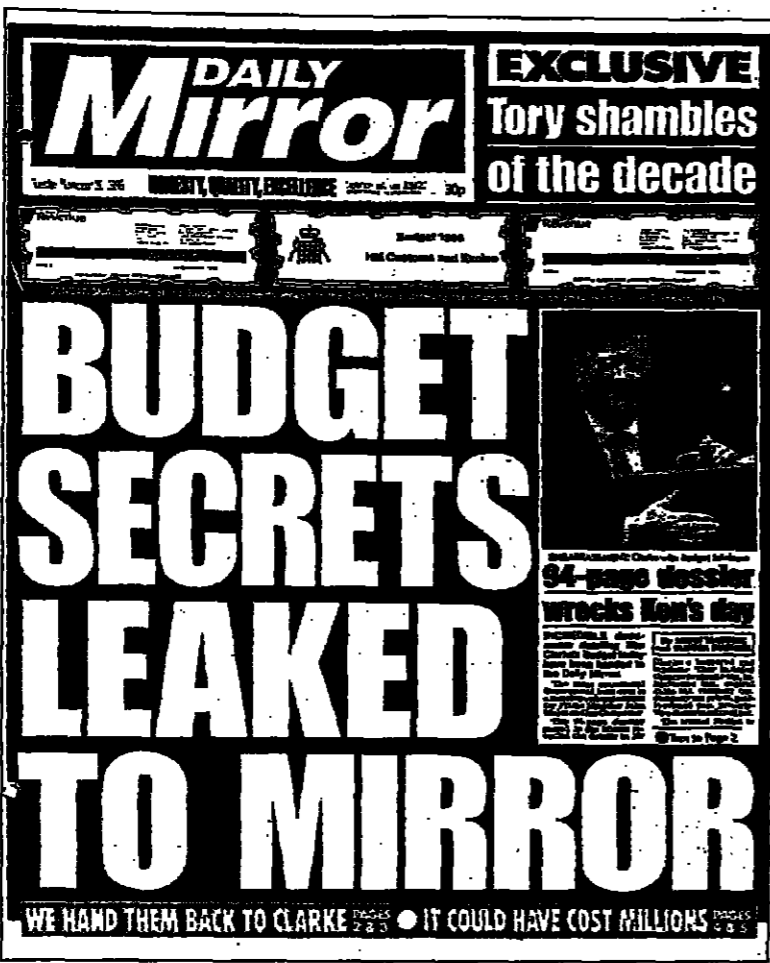
He was also the MP who, in 1978, exposed Sir Anthony Blunt, the Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures, as a former Soviet agent.

Advertisement for Radio Times featuring a chef and the text 'See a world class chef from the dawn of time'. Includes the Radio Times logo and the slogan 'IT'S NOT WHAT YOU EXPECT.'

Handwritten text at the bottom of the page: 'سكربت الامم'

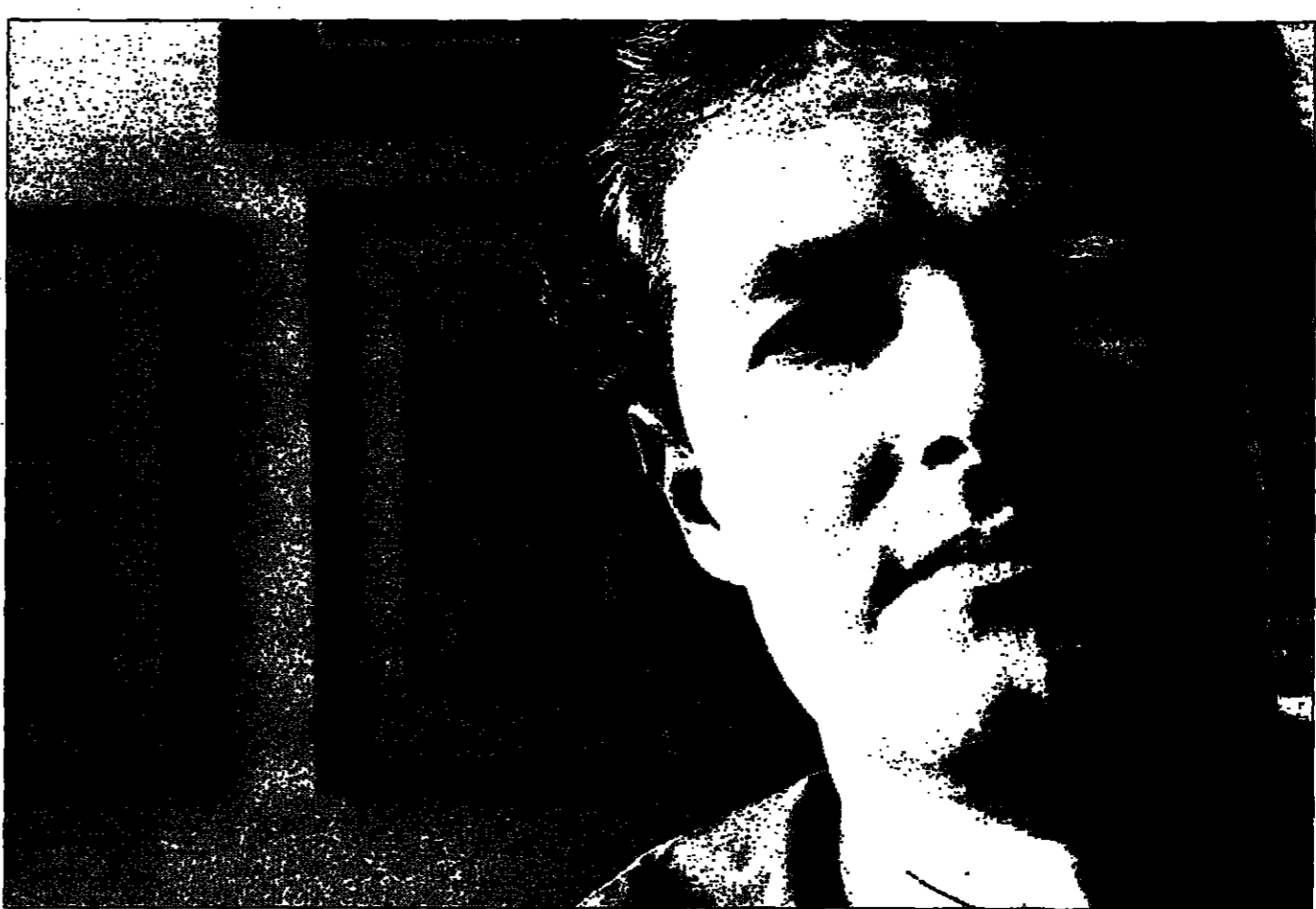
Budget leak crisis

How the Mirror cracked



The scoop the Daily Mirror had to settle for on its front page yesterday

Andrew Gull and Roy Greenslade on the bizarre game of cat and mouse started by the leak of Budget details



Editor Piers Morgan: 'I would have been branded the most disgraceful editor of all time and the Mirror the worst paper'

FOR more than six hours two Daily Mirror journalists toiled away in secret, intent on producing one of the most sensational editions in its 93-year history.

It was to be the Budget special to end all Budget specials, hitting the streets with most of the Treasury's secrets hours before Chancellor Kenneth Clarke addressed the Commons yesterday.

The journalists involved had been moved from the Mirror's notoriously leaky editorial offices on the 22nd floor of Canary Wharf, in London's Docklands. Editor Piers Morgan spirited his political editor Kevin Maguire and business editor Clinton Manning to the 20th floor, where there are secure computer terminals — and there they wrote a dozen strong stories from bundles of leaked Budget press releases.

But at about 6.30pm on Monday Mr Morgan — after a vigorous debate with the reporters, several senior members of staff and Mirror Group executive Charles Wilson — took the decision not to run it.

Fifty minutes later in Downing Street, Jonathan Haslam, John Major's press secretary, took a call from the Mirror editor.

"He was pretty shocked," said Mr Morgan. "There was a long silence and I gave assurances we would not publish — and most of the haggling was over how to return the documents."

But Downing Street claims it did not have categorical as-

urances from the Mirror. It reacted with a mixture of panic and ruthlessness, reaching for the legal bludgeon of an injunction. In spite of the Mirror's verbal promises, the Government was not willing to take the risk. While Mr Major and Mr Clarke were alerted, a Mirror lawyer was told Philip Havers, counsel acting for the Treasury, would be contacting a judge to seek an injunction.

Mr Havers was well placed to find a judge: he was in the Garrick, a haunt beloved of barristers, the judiciary and journalists. By the time the Mirror had faxed a form of papers if the documents were used. Mirror journalists said there was huge anxiety at its offices. "The suits were pacing around," one said.

Mr Morgan insisted his only condition for returning the papers was that the Mirror should be thanked for its responsible behaviour; an official quote was issued by Number 10: "It is responsible of the Mirror to recognise premature disclosure of any Budget material would be against the public interest."

Reporter Anthony Harwood handed the papers to a policeman at the gates of Downing Street at 10.30pm, telling him the Chancellor would need them in the morning.

Mr Morgan said: "I'd hoped we could have handed them over at the door, with a picture of Ken Clarke coming out in his slippers."

But discussions continued with Number 10 because not all were returned. "It was not deliberate. We gave 64 pages back, but the remainder were left lying on a desk and we sent them back when asked," Mr Morgan said.

Shortly after midnight, the Government had all the papers back under lock and key — and the Mirror had its story. Over five pages — under the splash headline: "Exclusive: Tory shambles of the decade. Budget secrets leaked to the Mirror" — it refrained from printing the details.

"Some people have said any decent journalist would have published — but I would have been branded the most disgraceful editor of all time and the Mirror the worst paper. We got the scoop without

causing damage to the markets," Mr Morgan said.

His political staff were less happy. Unusually, at 11pm, in the Commons press gallery the Mirror's door was closed, the equivalent of a Do Not Disturb sign; rival journalists said the Mirror's team was in the contact they were handed 94 pages of press releases: 36 Whitehall reports, 33 from the Inland Revenue, two from Customs and Excise and one from the Scottish Office.

Mr Morgan would not comment on the source and claimed to be unaware of Fleet Street rumours that the documents had been touted around several papers.

Asked whether the Mirror had been asked for payment, he said: "We have not paid any money. I am not going into details of the source or private arrangements. The motive behind this was not financial — it was to cause embarrassment."

Last night it emerged that a freelance investigative journalist was the man who contacted the Mirror.

Whitehall sources were finger printing rather than civil servants as the likely ultimate source. The newly privatised Stationery Office,

which prints government documents, said it was launching an investigation after suggestions that some of its staff could have been involved, although it boasts a previous 100 per cent security record. Last week, the company announced it was shedding 950 of its 2,500 workers.

Many of the key Budget documents such as the Chancellor's Red Book, which details public spending and taxation commitments, are printed at London Print Services, in Walworth, south London, a site protected by video surveillance cameras and security alarms.

Workers said they had been told some of their colleagues were to be questioned. One said the job losses had created "a very bad atmosphere in the print plant". Another said: "Normally, security is very tight because the management are very concerned about leaks."

In Whitehall, Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary and head of the Civil Service, ordered an immediate leak inquiry. It is likely to be carried out by the Cabinet Office's security division. Police will also investigate.

Although Budget papers are no longer protected by criminal law under the Official Secrets Act, it is made clear to civil servants they face the sack if they divulge details before the Chancellor's speech.

Papers leaked to the Mirror consisted of press notices to be handed out to journalists after Mr Clarke set down.

Only a handful of officials in the departments concerned would have seen them in advance. Many more printers and photocopying staff would have been involved in collating the press releases for 2,800 media packs, which were not prepared by officials at the Treasury until after the leak.

Mr Morgan insisted the decision not to publish was his and denied there had been a rift with other senior executives. "Having a good laugh at the Government is usually right up our street, but what chaos would it cause in the markets? We could not justify it because we did not know how much damage it would cause by just lobbing it into the papers."

"I discussed it with David Montgomery (Mirror Group's chief executive). The implications were pretty huge."

Additional reporting: Ewen MacAskill, Richard Norton-Taylor, Vivek Chaudhary and David Hencke

Would you have published the leaked documents? Editors reply



Richard Addis, Editor of the Daily Express: "We would not have published."



Will Hutton, Editor of the Observer: "Normally my answer is to publish, to get important documents into the public domain as quickly as possible. The intense security surrounding the Budget is far too totemic in Britain. By not publishing is one saying that any attempt by the economic correspondent to get details of the Budget is reprehensible? You are sending an important message out to people who may take great risks to get important information into the public domain."



Alan Rusbridges, Editor of the Guardian: "The Guardian has had its share of accurate Budget leaks. If they could have been authenticated I would have published a well-informed piece based on the documents. I don't think it was very clever to send the papers back to the Government since they could well reveal the source."



Stuart Higgins, Editor of the Sun: "If we were sure that the documents were authentic then we would publish."



Andrew Marr, Editor of the Independent: "If some Tory politician had passed us the Budget you bet we would have used it. If we felt it had come about through a political leak and we had not been asked to pay for the documents we would have used them. We would have been clear that they weren't stolen. This was not necessarily clear in this case."

John Witherow, Editor of the Sunday Times: "First you have to establish whether the documents are accurate and true and that they were not stolen. Once all that had been done we would publish. I don't think the market would have reacted in an extraordinary manner. As long as the documents have been obtained by legitimate journalistic means it is not a newspaper's job to keep government secrets."

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In short, The Wizard of Oz is a non-stop orgy of drugs and violence; and yet its video is still certified as "U — Suitable For All". Will no one — not even the Daily Mail — protect us from this filth?

Francis Wheen

G2 page 7

4 BRITAIN

News in brief

Police seize record haul of cannabis

POLICE have seized £2.5 million worth of cannabis during a raid at a former mushroom farm in Rushyford, Co Durham, in what is believed to be the largest seizure of its kind in Britain. Seven people were arrested.

Detectives from Durham police and officers from the North-east regional crime squad discovered three polythene production tunnels each 50 metres long and four metres high. Two contained 2,000 mature plants. Also seized was heating, ventilation and lighting equipment. Growers were using a system which requires chemicals and water but no soil.

Detective Chief Inspector Paul Green of Durham police said: "I am extremely pleased with the outcome of what has been a long and exhaustive inquiry."

Drug mother gets probation

A MOTHER who injected herself and her two young sons with lethal drugs was put on probation in a London court for two years yesterday.

The 34-year-old hospital pharmacy technician from the Isle of Sheppey, Kent, stole temazepam tablets and phials of insulin from work and administered them to her sons. Maidstone crown court was told at a hearing last month.

Distressed at the breakup of her relationship with a man, she administered the same lethal dose to herself. Her elder son, aged nine at the time, woke. Unable to wake either his mother or his eight-year-old brother, he dialed 999.

While being treated afterwards, the mother had said: "I have got no one to take care of the children. Just let us die."

The woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, had admitted two charges of administering a noxious substance so as to endanger life in November last year.

Shooting clubs thumbs down

THREE shooting clubs near Dunblane — including one used by the mass murderer Thomas Hamilton — have been expelled by the local sports council.

Dunblane Sports Council voted to end the clubs' membership and to refund their £20 affiliation fees after an 11-2 vote.

Council chairman Gillie Thomson said: "After the Dunblane tragedy, nothing can justify support for handguns in any form. We owe it to the people of Stirling to dissociate ourselves from any organisation that uses firearms."

The three clubs — Calender Rifle and Pistol Club, which Hamilton visited; Killin Gun Club and the Bridge of Allan and Stirling Smallbore Rifle Club — have been affiliated to the local sports council since 1981.

Jailed Kurd is freed

A KURD jailed in Britain for two years on the grounds of national security and for unspecified reasons of "a political nature", was freed yesterday. Sezai Ucar, aged 27, wanted by the Turkish authorities, was released from Rochester prison, said his lawyer, Pierre Machouls.

His release follows a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights last week in Strasbourg. Karanji Singh Chahal, a Sikh leader jailed on national security grounds, had been held illegally.

According to his lawyer, Mr Ucar had been tortured when detained by the Turkish security forces before seeking asylum in Britain. He has been given leave to remain here, though it is not clear for how long.

Rozan Ates, another Kurd held on national security grounds, is expected to be released from Belmarsh prison, south east London, today. — Richard Norton-Taylor

Morrison charged with affray

RETURN of the Mack star Mark Morrison was yesterday charged with two criminal offences after answering bail at a west London police station. The 24-year-old singer was charged with possession of a prohibited weapon and affray, following an incident at an all night supermarket last month.

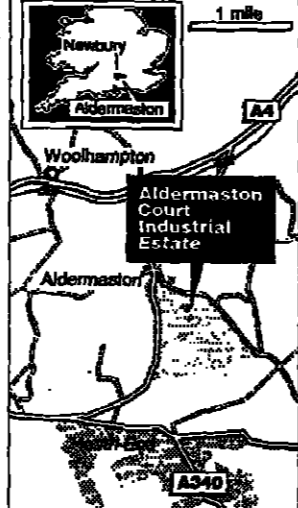
Morrison arrived at Notting Hill police station at 2pm with his solicitor and two other men who declined to give their names. After one hour they left without comment.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said: "Mark Morrison, aged 24, appeared on January 7 at Marylebone magistrates' court on two charges of possession of a prohibited weapon and affray. This relates to incidents on October 20 at a food and wine store in Notting Hill Gate."

Morrison, from Leicester, had a number one hit with Return of the Mack and has scored in the singles charts since.

Award for Guardian reporter

CHRIS MICHILL, the Guardian's medical correspondent, was yesterday named winner of the British Medical Association's medical journalist of the year award for the best journalistic contribution to the public understanding of health or medicine.



DAMAGES of £6m were awarded against the Ministry of Defence in the High Court yesterday after it waited two years to admit contamination of a site Paul Brown reports



The Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston, where plutonium contamination of a neighbouring site was not admitted for two years

Plutonium leak kept secret

DAMAGES of £6 million were awarded against the Ministry of Defence yesterday for causing radioactive contamination of an industrial estate next to its nuclear weapons plant at Aldermaston, in Berkshire.

Blue Circle Industries had sued the ministry because it said a £10.6 million deal to sell the estate collapsed when the purchaser found it had been contaminated with plutonium. There is no evidence that anyone suffered contamination in the incident.

Although the extent of the

contamination had been known "up to ministerial level" for two years before it was disclosed to Blue Circle, it was not until the sale was almost complete that the ministry sanctioned disclosure.

Mr Justice Carnworth, giving judgment, said Clive Mearns, an executive of Sun Micro-systems, a US company which was to buy the site, was shocked the contamination had been disclosed so late. "It destroyed his confidence in the Atomic Weapons Establishment's management. They had allowed three years to go by without telling Blue Circle

and without making plans to remedy the problem. He did not feel that Sun could require its staff to move to a site with plutonium contamination."

Subsequently 1,000 cubic metres of soil were removed at a cost of £250,000, and Blue Circle's own office workers now occupy the site along with a number of smaller companies which rent office space. There is a 34-bedroom hotel and conference centre.

Contamination was caused when 5/16in of rain fell in a freak storm on July 2, 1993. Ponds on the AWE Aldermaston site overflowed into a

Aldermaston villager explains why fears of a leak from the local atomic weapons plant are all just so much ancient history

WHEN Roger Brown heard in 1993 that the flood that had poured through 30 homes and the primary school in Aldermaston village four years earlier may have contained plutonium he demanded a public inquiry.

Not only was he alarmed

industrial estate in 1989 had meant that the stream running behind houses in Aldermaston High Street had become a raging torrent which flooded houses and meant half the village had to be evacuated — but no one mentioned the extra hazard of radioactivity.

Yesterday Mr Brown, who was then the district councillor for the village and is now chairman of the parish council, said: "That was a very bad day in 1993. I was stunned and upset and we wanted reassurance. We were not at all

happy about the secrecy. We wanted to know why we had not been told."

The decision yesterday brought those events back to him, but he said that since then the new management at AWE had "done everything possible to reassure the village."

At his request, Newbury borough council had paid for the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) to take samples in gardens and in the primary school playground to make sure that there was no radioactivity. "We discovered that the AWE had already taken samples to reassure themselves that the plutonium that reached the Blue Circle site had not come as far as the village."

"A man from the NRPB addressed a meeting of the village. We did not understand a word of it, but went away feeling a lot better."

Mr Brown is a member of the local liaison committee set up as a result of the 1993 disclosure to inform the village of any problems.

"We went back to planting vegetables in our gardens and eating them a couple of years ago. We are not worried about Aldermaston. It gives 5,000 people work, and does not affect the value of our houses."

He said that Blue Circle was entitled to protect its own commercial interest but, as far as the village was concerned, it was a historic incident. "We are allowed access to the industrial site and the lake that caused all the trouble."

"People walk round it because it is very pretty. We do not worry about getting contaminated, we are sure all that has been removed."

50,000 drivers join lorry blockade, reports Alex Duval Smith

French truck drivers dispute halts Status Quo tour

ROCK fans in Belfast were last night wondering what they had done to deserve the wrath of French lorry drivers, after Status Quo's Can't Stop tour ground to a halt at a blockade in Calais.

As the number of road blockades increased to more than 230 across France, the impact of the drivers' eight-day dispute spread. Lorries carrying instruments and sound equipment for Kiss and Metallica were also stranded.

Status Quo, who were due to appear at the Ulster Hall last night and tonight before moving on to Dungannon and Dublin, said the disruption caused by French lorry drivers demanding improved working conditions was the worst to hit the band.

Its lead singer, Francis Russell, said: "We're stuck in Belfast doing the Guardian crossword and all our equipment is on two lorries in Calais. It's incredibly frustrating because in all the band's history, we've got through snowstorms and bad weather to get to gigs. We have only ever cancelled six or seven times."

French toy manufacturers yesterday joined the chorus of calls from the country's car, food, packaging and distribution industries for a rapid conclusion to talks between five transport unions and haulage companies, now in their sixth round.

Up to 50,000 French drivers of articulated lorries have joined the dispute, claiming that their employers do not respect European agreements on driving time and calling



Status Quo, whose Can't Stop tour has been halted

for retirement at the age of 55. Some 700 British lorries and at least as many from each of France's other neighbouring countries have become stuck in motorway and port blockades.

By yesterday afternoon, about 100 British drivers had taken ferries back to Dover, some leaving their trailers in Calais and others taking their loads with them.

Tesco began its promised airlift of fresh fruit and vegetables but said the extra cost would not be passed on to customers. Sainsbury's and Safeway said they might start buying supplies in France by lorry drivers con-

Rough justice site wins award

New Kennedy Heritage Correspondent

A NOTTINGHAM museum where visitors are treated as criminals yesterday won the Cullis-Kian Prize for its outstanding achievements in its first year.

Lloyd Grossman, presenting the annual Gulbenkian awards for excellence in museums, said he had emerged from the Galleries of Justice, housed in a Grade II* listed Georgian courts and prison complex in Nottingham city centre, thinking "Ugh, how horrible."

Visitors are given a prison number, subjected to a trial, and marched down to the condemned cells from which death on the gallows in the prison yard, or transportation, were the only escape.

The building, which includes perfectly preserved Victorian court rooms, Georgian and Victorian prison blocks, bath house and laundry, and an Edwardian police station, was saved from a developer by a charitable trust, and is intended to become a national museum of law.

The other buildings will be opened up over the next few years, with a £4.2 million lottery grant.

Staff were looking for a



Eric Wilkinson in the caves he found beneath the old city jail

blocked up Victorian passage to the laundry, to improve visitor access, when building supervisor Ernie Wilkinson broke through a brick wall and found a complex of unrecorded medieval caves. Archaeologists are still studying them, but believe they may have been the earliest prison cells on the site.

At the awards ceremony yesterday in the British Museum, Mr Grossman urged people to lobby fiercely for museums between now and the general election. "Museums are as important to society as the NHS, security or defence. They are the measure of a decent society."

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the week

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صكنا من الامل

Greece turns on migrants

Helena Smith in Athens

ATHENS is poised to pass legislation that will turn Greece into one of the bastions of Fortress Europe after years in which its porous borders have been regarded as the Achilles heel of the European Union.

Since the collapse of communism, Greece has become a magnet for migration from the Middle East, Africa, the Balkans and former Soviet republics. With its long, unwieldy coastline and mountainous terrain, officials say it is increasingly being viewed as the most accessible back door into Europe.

It is a very clever way of unearthing migrants, who are currently forced to work in appalling conditions on the black market, and then deporting them when their time is up." Ms Sokou said.

"All we want is to be given our minimum rights as political asylum seekers," said Abu Ali, a Baghdad lawyer. "Many of us walked for up to 40 days to get to the land of democracy. We risked our lives crossing heavily mined land borders — and now Greece will only give us a six-month permit to live and work here."

The move underlines the continued instability of the predominantly Kurdish area of Iraq three months after Baghdad's army overran it during fighting against rival groups.

WASHINGTON has offered to evacuate about 5,000 people from northern Iraq to protect them from President Saddam Hussein's secret police.

World news in brief

US to evacuate aid workers from Iraq

WASHINGTON has offered to evacuate about 5,000 people from northern Iraq to protect them from President Saddam Hussein's secret police. The offer, announced by a state department spokesman, Glyn Davies, applies to employees of non-governmental organisations affiliated to the United States, and their immediate families.

Threat to American forces

ACLANDESTINE Islamic group in Saudi Arabia yesterday threatened to attack United States forces in the kingdom unless jailed Muslim militants are freed.

Aznar offends Cuba

RELATIONS between Spain and Cuba hit an all time low yesterday after Havana appears to have caught Madrid's new conservative government off guard by rejecting its ambassador to the island in protest at "flagrant interference" in its affairs.

Hong Kong law change

IN A move certain to irritate China, Britain yesterday announced plans to amend Hong Kong's laws on treason and crimes against the state, pre-empting the introduction of anti-subversion laws after the colony is handed back to Beijing next summer.

Detained pair 'not hijackers'

ETHIOPIAN radio yesterday identified the two men, a Kenyan and a Djiboutian, held as suspected hijackers of the jet which crashed-landed in the Comoros islands and confirmed that they had "no connection" with the incident.

Death squads linked to army

ACTIONING on advice from United States military advisers, Colombia's armed forces reorganised intelligence operations in the early 1990s, tightening ties between the army and paramilitaries who have been accused of killing civilians, a human rights report says.

Protest at Bhopal climbdown

VICTIMS of the 1984 gas leak from the fertiliser plant in Bhopal squatted outside parliament in New Delhi yesterday to protest against the dropping of manslaughter charges against executives of Union Carbide.

Literary classic found

AN original manuscript of a Japanese literary classic has turned up in a secondhand bookshop three centuries after it was written.

Denis Staunton in Berlin reports on a sympathetic portrayal of Hitler's lover without PC pretensions

Unlikely heroine Braun takes a bow

THE BERLINER Ensemble, the theatre founded by Bertolt Brecht that became the cultural showpiece of communist East Germany, has discovered an unlikely heroine — Eva Braun, Hitler's lover will be given her most sympathetic treatment ever on a German stage when a new play opens at the theatre on Friday.



Nap time for Hitler... The Führer dozes off while Eva Braun, his lover for 16 years, looks on in this archive photograph

public lives separate, avoiding any discussion of politics at home and keeping her relationship with Braun secret from the German public.

She saw Hitler once or twice a month, spending most of her time at their Bavarian mountain retreat watching films and collecting an enormous wardrobe of the latest fashions. She

took little interest in politics and appears never to have criticised Hitler's actions.

who nearly devastated the whole of Europe. They were together for 16 years, but she was only able to achieve what she wanted — marriage — a few hours before her death.

The play will run in repertory at the Berliner Ensemble alongside Brecht's play about Hitler, The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui.

Serb TV shuns embryonic revolution

Julian Borger in Belgrade

YESTERDAY'S edition of Politika, the newspaper run by Serbia's ruling party, carried stories about the country's glowing economic potential, a visiting Greek delegation, and the advantages of traditional Orthodox cookery.

work on the presses — its print run would be reduced from 200,000 to 80,000. Politika's editor, Marojko Vukotic, said yesterday: "We may have to photocopy some of the pages and give them out free. But there is a lot of pressure on us. We've got our backs to the wall."

Pyramid riches seduce Albania

Joanna Robertson in Tirana reports on the huge returns investors can expect on their savings. Unless the bubble bursts

Huddled among the kiosks crammed into Tirana's main park, the thriving Cafe Marlboro is usually filled with drinkers. This morning it is almost deserted.

Her father has invested his life savings in a scheme, and plans to use the interest to buy a new home.

grimy lek notes, is Sokol. He grins and says that he has just sold his flat. He expects to double his money in just a few weeks.

The directors of the scheme have become unrecognisable celebrities and are not encouraged, and they are reluctant to comment on how they find the cash to pay their creditors so handsomely.

Secretive EU institution forced to go public about not being open

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE MOST secretive bureaucracy of the European Union will face unwelcome publicity today for its failure to meet the supposed commitment to openness.

dors of member states, to release documents relating to meetings three years ago on Justice and Home affairs will be referred today to the European Ombudsman.

by Tony Bunyan, a British journalist, whose requests for documents have been repeatedly refused. It is the second such case to attempt to prise open institutions of the EU.

The Council refused Mr Bunyan's requests on the grounds that he had applied for too many documents and that his requests were not precise enough.

The latest application comes a day after the council of ministers' sister body, the European Commission, launched the Citizens First campaign to increase citizens' awareness of their rights.

The Council refused Mr Bunyan's requests on the grounds that he had applied for too many documents and that his requests were not precise enough.

8 OBITUARIES

Bert Achong



Bert Achong... a flair for demystifying difficult concepts

Finding the foamy virus

BERT Achong, who has died of a brain tumour aged 67, was an internationally recognised expert on the study of viruses by electron microscopy...

he gave papers at international meetings and he co-authored several books on Epstein-Barr virus. In 1971 Achong discovered a new virus by electron microscopic examination of human cancer cells...

ceptis seem straightforward, tedious techniques interesting and the subject exciting. He was responsible for many scientists choosing careers in research.

expected speed. Within three weeks a brain tumour was diagnosed. Treatment proved ineffective, but although he lost his power of speech he remained his same old charming self, uncomplaining to the end.

Vera von der Heydt

The last of the great Jungians

THE last time I visited Vera von der Heydt she lent me an important new article, weighed against some professional fog, went straight and humorously to the heart of our world...

there for anyone who wants to deepen an understanding of the relationship between depth psychology and religion. To these she brought her passionate loyalty to Jung's teachings — and as passionate a reaction to those she felt had betrayed them.



Vera von der Heydt... 'It seems as if the search is more important than the goal'

Letters

Margaretta D'Arcy & John Arden write: We first met George Byatt (November 20) in London in the 1970s at Theatre Writers' Union meetings. He insisted that the TWU, as a brand-new body, should be as much a creative experiment as any of the new plays of its members...

George was a constant ally and pillar of support. His participation in the largely-improvised 1977 show, A Pinch of History (by M D'Arcy), at the Ambience Theatre was inventive, exhilarating and unapologetically generous without it the production might never have got off the ground.

Margyn Berry writes: I spent my brief sabbatical from teaching at Jesus College, Cambridge, where a chance remark led me to the university's library's locked-away books.

Jack Poppellwell

Words, music and modesty

IN THE 1940s, every butcher's boy used to whistle the songs of Jack Poppellwell, who has died aged 87. If I Should Fall in Love Again, My Girl's an Irish Girl, Really and Truly, and every singer from Bing Crosby to Gigli, Gracie Fields to Vera Lynn, Anne Shelton to Max Bygraves would record them.

office and found a corpse. Busbybody was Poppellwell's most famous success. Not that the police were allowed to do much sleuthing. There was Hand's Mrs Mop was always well ahead of them with clues, lines and laughs. But when she reappeared in a variation on the theme in Dead Easy (1973) Poppellwell came abruptly unstuck.



Jack Poppellwell... more than 70 songs and 16 plays

looked like Feydeau. Derek Farr played an adulterer whose family descends on his love nest, including Margaret Lockwood as a knowing wife with lover in tow.

Birthdays

John Alderton, actor, 66; Prof John Ashworth, former director, London School of Economics, 66; Rodney Bewes, actor, 59; Randy Brecker, jazz musician, 51; Lord Bridges, former diplomat, 69; Colette Brown, chief executive, Personal Investment Authority, 60; Gwynn Davies, economist, member of the Chancellor's panel, 46; Robert Douglas, former newscaster, 83; James Evans, former chairman, International Thomson Organisation, 64; Lord Howard de Walden, racehorse owner and breeder, 84; Dr Kim Howells, Labour MP, 50; Rosaline Kelly, publishing consultant, 74; Verity Lambert, television and film producer, 61; The Marquess of Lansdowne, former Conservative minister, 84; Sir John Mador, former editor, Nature magazine, 71; Baroness (Ann) Mallalieu, QC, 51; Sir David Nickson, chairman, Clydesdale Bank, 67; Jill Sander, fashion designer, 53; Alan Stammers, scriptwriter, 67; Ernie Wise, comedian, 71.

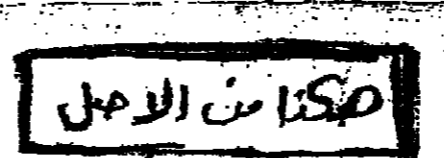
Jackdaw

and he was Hepburn. Oddly enough, I'm told that Tracy had the same problem. Q: You have said that you are a crazy old Jewish socialist. In I'm Not Rappaport and, coincidentally, you are a crazy old Jewish socialist. Did that have anything to do with your getting the part?

Q12. What should I do if I meet Cesium in dark alley? A12. Run!!!!!! Scientific Cesium obsession found at all cesium by N Tarr. Q3. What about Fr***ium? A3. We do not mention the name in alt. cesium, that false element being an upstart and pretender, vile, depraved, unnatural, and having no staying power. The longest lived isotope, Fr23 has a half-life of only 22 minutes. Try to base a global time standard on that!!! Q4. What is AMSWBWU? A4. AMSWBWU stands for the Association of Mad Scientists Who Want to Blow Up the World. It is a highly secretive organisation. Its activities involve large numbers of monkeys and vast quantities of Cesium. Given the indisputable fact that all persons in direct contact with the organisation have mysteriously vanished from the Net, the fewer questions asked, the better. Most of our information about this shadowy group derives from one Brendan Dunn, who was instrumental in the formation of alt. cesium. He, alas, is among the vanished.

Q12. What should I do if I meet Cesium in dark alley? A12. Run!!!!!! Scientific Cesium obsession found at all cesium by N Tarr. Last notes 1. I WILL always love you — Whitney Houston (A real tear-jerker) 2. My Way — Frank Sinatra (Enough said.) 3. Unchained Melody — The Righteous Brothers (No worse than Please Release Me which I heard at a funeral recently.) 4. Wind beneath My Wings. 5. Memories — Barbra Streisand. 6. Imagine — John Lennon. 7. In The Mood — Glenn Miller. 8. Smoke Gets In Your Eyes — The Platters (At a crematorium?) The top songs currently requested at America's according to the Roadie Peat Athlison in the Oxford Diocesan. Dance Lord DEAR Editors, In about 1996 my wife and I were on holiday in Playa de las Americas, Tenerife, and one evening we decided to go dancing at the Hotel Park Troya along the front. After a few early dances we set out to watch a tall Indian-looking gentleman and his partner take to the floor to the music of a Latin American rumba. He was tall, greying, dark and had a most beautiful dark lady. Their movement was beautiful to behold, and his smile of enjoyment entrancing. We watched, both of us intrigued by the aura of radiance exuded by the beauty of those dancers. Shortly afterwards, the couple seemed to disappear from the ballroom, but we could not forget their brilliant display of controlled rhythmic dancing. Only recently on my last visit did I recall this incident with the connection of the reported appearance of Maitreya. Could you tell me who this special couple were? Mr W R King, Whitley Bay. Benjamin Creme's Master confirms that the male dancer was Maitreya and the "woman" the master Jesus. From Share International, published by Share International Foundations, an organisation in association with the Department of Public Information at the United Nations. Benjamin Creme is the British chief editor of Share International, an artist and an estheticist for many years. His telepathic contact with a Master of Wisdom allows him to receive up to date information on the Christ's emergence and to expand on the Ageless Wisdom Teachings (apparently).

HOW YOU use your mobile phone could damage your health. Harley Street neurologist Dr Anthony Hopkins treated a man suffering pressure palsy, a severe muscle weakness and pain in his arm and his shoulder. The man had been resting his mobile phone between his right ear and right shoulder for about two hours while he was driving his car. Dr Hopkins has termed the ailment "mobile phone user's shoulder droop" and thinks it's probably caused by the hard edge of the phone compressing the nerves that supply the shoulder muscles. Live on the painful times we live in. Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4366; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Emily Sheffield



The Guardian Budget

Taxation Spending

- Windfall tax steals Labour thunder
- Double whammy on travel and insurance
- Deep cuts in housing benefit
- Student loans sell-off frees funds for schools

Privatised companies complain of big cut in allowances for investment 'Windfall tax' put on utilities

Simon Beavis, Nicholas Bannister and Chris Barrie

THE Chancellor was accused last night of imposing "a windfall tax by any other name" on the utilities. The claim came after he pushed through plans to impose a dramatic cut on the tax allowances privatised companies can claim on investments in pipes, pylons and power stations.

Tax experts were quick to draw parallels with Labour's plans for a windfall tax on the utilities, but Paul Sampson, a partner in Coopers and Lybrand, said: "The point about his proposals is that they are cumulative and continuing, whereas Gordon Brown is planning a one-off hit on the utilities."

The utilities were scrambling to assess the full impact of the capital allowance move, which will increase the Exchequer's take from £45 million a year to £225 million in 1998 and £275 million in 1999.

The Chancellor is proposing that assets with working lives of more than 25 years should qualify for capital allowances of 6 per cent compared with 25 per cent now.

The electricity and gas industries appear to be most vulnerable to the measure in the short term. Water companies may be able to use the shelter of advanced corpora-

Utilities were last night predicting a fight with the Inland Revenue over the classification of assets.

John Stiggers, director of the Society of British Gas Industries, which represents 150 gas equipment suppliers, said investment was already suffering badly from the uncertainty surrounding the Monopolies Commission inquiry into British Gas's Transco division. "A further disincentive to invest is extremely unwelcome and knocks on across industry."

British Gas confirmed that the measures were likely to hit it and all other utilities, but said it was still assessing the impact.

The National Grid was more forthright. Calculating the cost at £20 million a year, chief executive David Jones said: "I can't understand the rationale for it unless it were an antidote to windfall tax."

'It discriminates against capital intensive, long term investment'

Power generators were concerned that the measure would further skew the electricity market towards gas stations which traditionally operate over 15 years rather than the 30 to 40 year cycles seen in nuclear and coal plants. One senior source said: "This is a vicious blow to the utilities. It discriminates against capital-intensive, long-term investment in favour of the short-term gas merchants."

A spokesman for Hyder, the Welsh water and electricity company, said: "Water companies, more than other utilities, will be protected by their ACT mountains... but we will be turning into real tax payers; the question is when that will happen."

The move is expected to lead to a swift revaluation of utility shares on the stock market and will encourage big investors that it could force utilities to slow investment in Britain's crumbling public services infrastructure.

At the same time it emerged that the Government has laid plans to push through an extra £720 million of spending on Magnox Electric, the company which controls those nuclear reactors remaining in the public sector, over the next three years.

The provision is designed to smooth the way for the merger of Magnox with British Nuclear Fuels, but underlines the industry's continuing heavy toll on the taxpayer despite its privatisation.



The Chancellor arriving to present his Budget. He claimed the economy was the best for a generation - 'a Rolls Royce recovery, built to last'

Interest rate and tax sums fail to add up

Notebook



Alex Brummer

THE central assertion of Kenneth Clarke's Budget strategy - that his tight fiscal stand removes the need for higher interest rates - does not stand up to anything but the most cursory scrutiny. What Mr Clarke solemnly presents as a prudent Budget, which avoids election giveaways, squares the arithmetic only with a degree of chicanery. While this may please the Chancellor's cabinet colleagues, it is unlikely to fool the financial markets.

There are three main areas of the Budget worth closer investigation: the economic forecasts, which are unjustifiably optimistic unless the inflation target is thrown to the wind; the belief that public spending on infrastructure can be ratcheted down through the private finance initiative; and the Chancellor's reliance on "spend to save" to end the shortfall in taxation receipts. The proposition that these latter measures could draw in some £6.7 billion of revenues over three years - far more than all his other new tax raising measures together - is faintly preposterous. However, in this last spin of the electoral dice Mr Clarke has had to rely upon mathematical tricks to deliver the trio of enticing tax cuts, a lower public sector borrowing requirement and higher spending on education and health.

The main way in which Mr Clarke aims to increase tax revenue, so as to bring down the borrowing requirement, is by growing the economy at what must be considered an unsustainable rate. The Budget forecast predicts that growth in Britain will pick up from the current level of 2.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent next year. But rather than being based on what Britain needs, export-led growth, this will be fuelled largely by consumers' expenditure, which is seen as climbing by 4.25 per cent - an unsustainable level if the economy is not to overheat. Mr Clarke and his advisers appear convinced that there will be some recovery in exports as the economies of our main markets in Europe pick up speed: maybe. But he appears to have conveniently forgotten one of the truths of

post-war British economic management - that industry has performed best when assisted by a competitive pound. The 10 per cent jump in the value of the pound since Mr Clarke delivered his 1995 Budget could scramble our export performance.

Certainly, there is reason to believe that the Bank of England will be none too pleased with the heady consumer spending projections for next year, if it is to have any prospect of keeping inflation within 2.5 per cent. It believes that domestic demand holds the key to inflation: this will be impossible without further base rate increases.

The second difficulty with the Budget is public spending. The control total for public spending looks admirably buttoned down at a time when Mr Clarke is giving the traditional boost to the sensitive areas of schools and health, which will be part of the election battleground. This is partly being achieved, however, by cutting back on capi-

In this last spin of the electoral dice, Clarke has had to rely on tricks of mathematics

tal expenditure - the nation's infrastructure if one likes. Net capital spending which stood at £10.3 billion in the last financial year, will fall to £8.5 billion this year and £6.7 billion in 1997-98. The decline in capital spending is made possible by taking some projects of budget through the private finance initiative, on which £10.4 billion is projected to be spent over the three years to 1999-2000. However, the PFI has been consistently behind schedule and its effects on the overall Budget numbers overestimated. The result is a slow start to critical projects, less than satisfactory infrastructure and some rather soft budgetary numbers.

The third structural weakness in the Budget is the reliance on less than solid taxation gains. One of the biggest figures mentioned by Mr Clarke was the possibility that his £900 million enforcement of tax collection would raise £5.7 billion. Even if there were a number of Rupert Murdochs paying only minimal tax, the markets would take a great deal of convincing on this.

Taken at face value, the £19 billion public sector borrowing requirement next year ought to be enough to convince the City that Mr Clarke remains a sound chap. But when one blows away at the swaying supports for this figure, the sirens sound.

Triumphalism attired in the garb of Mr Micawber

Sketch



Simon Hoggart

MR CLARKE offered a triumphalist Budget, though perhaps he should have arranged a few triumphs first. Nonetheless there was a cocky swagger to him as he belted up to the despatch box.

At one point he reminded us of his Nottingham origins, and I realised who we were watching: Albert Finney in Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, out in the late 1950s wearing his sharp new Hush Puppies, a packet of cigarettes in his pocket, downing the first tax-reduced pint of the night.

The successes are, of course, a little threadbare. The best he could manage was that this year's borrowing requirement was down to a mere £26 billion, hardly more

than a grand for every household in the country.

The Chancellor is the Mr Micawber of the deficit economy. "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure, twenty-six billion and twenty pounds, result happiness!"

He even looked like Mr Micawber too, rubicund and cheerful, spraying bad jokes around like a jolly uncle who has been too long at the alcohol, or whatever was the pale yellow liquid which he guzzled throughout his speech.

It is inconceivable that he was tipsy, but he had the relaxed bonhomie of someone who plans to be soon.

The new measures against tax evasion would not, he assured us, bring about "top interest" or "rape" - the first 'du' of Gummie is to 'ma' sure...

A new parliamentary figure appeared in his speech, Ms Debbie Speager. She may be related to Mr Deputy Speaker. But Mr Deputy Speaker, for some reason best known to himself.

Then he would cough, particularly in the passage about the need to stop people smoking.

"I haven't been converted to bubble-gum flavoured alcopops myself," he said. With any other minister this would have been irony. With Ken you suspected it was just a

matter of time. He began with a few lacklustre scripted jokes ("contrary to popular belief, I usually look in the Mirror in the morning.") then moved on to his business of the day - taunting Gordon Brown.

He said that few serious commentators doubted that growth would be lower than 3.5 per cent next year.

"I hear mutterings from the shadow chancellor - I said, few serious commentators..."

There were loud Tory cheers and jeers. But Mr Brown looked furious. He began banging angrily on his notes, then sucked in his cheeks as if sucking on an acid drop, a sulphuric acid drop.

(To stamp out bullying, some schools have adopted a "buddy" system. But Mr Brown's buddy, Tony Blair, beamed as if it was the funniest joke he'd heard all day.)

Mr Clarke's cunning was, perhaps, to make us think this was a cautious Budget for the growth would be lower than next year, when in fact it was a spending spree for Labour to pick up the bills.

Soon afterwards Mr Blair made a speech which was passionate, committed and egalitarian.

As Labour MPs cheered him deliriously, I swear some of them could be seen asking: "This bloke's good. Who on earth is he?"

How the sums add up for you

Single employed person						Married, self-employed, 2 children						Married employed person						Single pensioner (aged between 65 and 74*)						
Annual income £	Income tax gain / loss, £	National Insurance gain/loss, £	Loss from excise -VAT, £	Monthly gain/loss, £ 1997-98	Percentage change	Annual income £	Income tax gain / loss, £	National Insurance gain/loss, £	Loss from excise -VAT, £	Monthly gain/loss, £ 1997-98	Percentage change	Annual income £	Income tax gain / loss, £	National Insurance gain/loss, £	Loss from excise -VAT, £	Monthly gain/loss, £ 1997-98	Percentage change	Annual income £	Income tax gain / loss, £	National Insurance gain/loss, £	Loss from excise -VAT, £	Monthly gain/loss, £ 1997-98	Percentage change	
3,500	0.00	0.22	-0.22	-0.78	-0.22%	3,500	0.00	0.48	-0.28	-0.53	-0.17%	3,500	0.00	0.22	-2.18	-1.83	-0.65%	2,500	0.00	0.00	-0.35	-0.35	-0.17%	
5,000	4.67	-0.63	-0.63	-0.96	-0.19%	5,000	0.00	0.43	-0.52	-0.96	-0.25%	5,000	0.00	-0.03	-3.08	-3.05	-0.79%	5,000	1.50	0.00	-1.70	-0.60	-0.10%	
10,000	7.40	-0.88	-0.88	-1.59	-0.16%	10,000	0.78	0.32	-3.44	-1.21	-0.17%	10,000	-7.80	-0.88	-5.38	-1.72	0.21%	10,000	5.17	0.00	-2.50	-2.37	0.36%	
15,000	11.55	-1.03	-0.88	-2.11	-0.14%	15,000	1.57	0.32	-4.20	-1.88	0.39%	15,000	-11.85	-1.88	-6.01	-2.15	0.17%	15,000	7.95	0.00	-3.58	-2.85	0.46%	
20,000	15.31	-0.83	-0.78	-2.61	-0.17%	20,000	2.37	0.32	-4.92	-2.56	0.59%	20,000	-15.81	-2.58	-7.04	-2.27	0.14%	20,000	12.50	0.00	-5.35	-4.17	0.40%	
25,000	19.27	-0.75	-0.78	-3.03	-0.12%	25,000	3.22	0.28	-5.57	-3.21	0.55%	25,000	-19.77	-3.78	-7.99	-2.60	0.12%	25,000	15.00	0.00	-7.13	-4.47	0.36%	
30,000	23.23	-0.70	-0.78	-3.45	-0.07%	30,000	4.07	0.28	-6.22	-3.89	0.62%	30,000	-23.79	-4.78	-10.81	-4.34	0.17%	30,000	17,500	18.57	0.00	-8.05	10.32	0.71%
40,000	36.33	-0.78	-0.81	-4.24	0.02%	40,000	5.70	0.28	-6.90	-4.56	0.62%	40,000	-36.83	-4.78	-16.85	-16.11	0.48%	40,000	20,000	16.75	0.00	-9.13	7.02	0.42%
50,000	46.33	-0.78	-0.80	-4.93	0.07%	50,000	7.20	0.28	-7.67	-5.04	0.65%	50,000	-36.83	-4.78	-16.82	-13.14	0.22%	50,000	25,000	20.91	0.00	-11.29	5.03	0.43%
75,000	56.33	-0.78	-0.80	-6.01	0.16%	75,000	11.20	0.28	-9.07	-6.01	0.85%	75,000	-36.83	-4.78	-24.38	-17.70	0.09%							
100,000	56.33	-0.78	-0.80	-6.97	0.25%	100,000	15.20	0.28	-9.85	-6.97	0.85%	100,000	-36.83	-4.78	-31.78	-17.74	-0.02%							

*The study refers to pensioners aged 65 to 74 because pensioners aged 75 and over are entitled to a higher pension amount.

Assumptions: (a) 5% gross income paid to contributory pension schemes. (Unemployed) (b) Contracted out of NI (SERPS)

Taxation

Lowest standard rate in 60 years bolstered by other appeals to true-blue voters, says Larry Elliott

Inching closer to 20p target

EIGHTEEN years after Mrs Thatcher's first election victory, the Conservatives will bring the basic rate of income tax 10p below the rate they inherited from Labour in 1979.

And the clear message from yesterday's Budget was that the Government will bring the main rate of tax down to its long-term goal of 20 per cent if they win a fifth term in office next year.

The Chancellor broadly followed the pattern he set last November, reducing income tax by about £2 billion, but clawing £500 million back through higher excise duties and an increase in taxes on both insurance premiums and air travel.

Mr Clarke said it was at its lowest level since Stanley Baldwin was Prime Minister 60 years ago.

But he buttressed the headline-grabbing changes in income tax with a number of other measures designed to spread his bounty across as many of the Government's core constituencies as possible.

Small businesses, one of the backbones of the Conservative Party, were exempted from the tougher regulations on capital allowances for long-life assets and offered "substantial extra help" with next year's business rates bills.

For the green lobby, there were changes to excise duties, designed to encourage cleaner petrol and eco-friendly lorries.

While petrol went up by 3p a litre last night, Mr Clarke reduced the duty on road fuel gas by 25 per cent. Heavy goods vehicles that meet stringent environmental standards will have their excise duty cut by 2500.

Apart from motorists, the only real losers from the Budget were smokers, who saw the excise duty on a packet of 20 cigarettes rise by 15p.

The rest of Mr Clarke's revenue-raising was concentrated on closing tax loopholes, by which he expects to garner £1 billion in 1997/98, rising to more than £2 billion by the turn of the century.

The Chancellor said that, once average earnings were taken into account, the average family would be £370 better off as a result of the Budget, and £1,100 better off than it was before the 1992 election.

However, the small print of the Treasury's Red Book showed that, despite the reduction in income tax, the overall taxation burden is now slightly higher than it was when the Callaghan government left office.

High taxes on spending and increases in social security taxes have meant that the state will take 35.75 per cent of national income through taxation in the current

financial year, against 34.25 per cent in 1978/79.

What is more, the Treasury's projections point to the tax burden continuing to rise for the rest of the century and beyond. By 2001/02, the last year for which the Government makes forecasts, tax as a share of gross domestic product will have risen to 38 per cent.

Treasury officials said that the rise in the tax burden was the result of two main factors.

It is assumed that excise duties on tobacco and petrol would continue to go up ahead of inflation, providing the Treasury with an additional £1 billion every year.

Further, the Treasury projects that tax allowances will rise in line with inflation, but the tendency of earnings to rise faster than prices means the tax take goes up — the phenomenon known as fiscal drag.

Labour said last night that the Government had not only proved to be a tax-raising party, but had also raised taxes in an unfair way. It said it was "give with one hand, take with the other" Budget.

Despite Labour's criticisms, the overall thrust of the Budget was more progressive than last year's, reflecting the likelihood that both main parties will be making a pitch for the votes of those on low and middle incomes at the election.

Mr Clarke told the Commons that he

could have emulated Nigel Lawson in the 1987 Budget and cut 2p off the basic rate, but instead he had decided to use some of his leeway to raise personal tax allowances and widen the 20 per cent lower-rate band.

The Chancellor said that his decision to raise the personal allowance by £280 to £4,045 — an increase three-and-a-half times the rate of inflation — would help those on low incomes. He raised the threshold for paying the top 40 per cent rate of income tax by £500, in line with inflation.

Announcing the decision to shave the basic rate from 24p to 23p, at a cost of £1,250 million, the Chancellor said that hitting the 20p target was one of the Major administration's "most important pledges".

He added: "We are proving that we can move towards the delivery of the promise, and still deliver healthy public finances. Every step we take makes it more and more credible."

Mr Clarke made only modest progress towards the abolition of inheritance tax and capital gains tax — two of the Prime Minister's most cherished aims.

The threshold for paying inheritance tax was raised by £15,000 to £215,000 — £10,000 more than indexation. But the CGT-exempt amount was raised in line with inflation by £200 to £5,300.

Travel and insurance

Retailers and airlines attack rises in rates

Premium tax up to 4 per cent
Air passenger duty doubled

INSURERS and the travel industry were united last night in fierce condemnation of proposals to raise nearly £3 billion over the next three years from increases in both insurance premium tax and air tax.

Insurance premium tax, which applies to most general insurance policies but not to life premiums, is to be raised from its current rate of 2.5 per cent to 4 per cent. This will take effect on April 1 next year. IPT was first announced, at 2.5 per cent, in the 1998 Budget.

But what really drew the ire of the industry was the Chancellor's decision to increase premium tax for non-life insurance to 4 per cent, said the ABI's director general, Mark Bolest.

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) had been braced for a rise in the insurance premium tax, but had never expected it to be increased to 4 per cent.

"We are surprised, saddened and disappointed that the Chancellor has decided to increase the rate of insurance premium tax for non-life insurance to 4 per cent," said the ABI's director general, Mark Bolest.

The ABI estimated that the insurance tax currently raises £750 million a year, a figure which will increase to £1.2 billion. The rise will add £7.60 to the £190 cost of the average family's buildings insurance; £5 to the £225 cost of the average contents insurance and £13.60 to a typical motor policy costing £340.

A spokesman for Legal & General said the industry was braced for further rises. France levies an 18 per cent tax on motor policies, while Italy applies a rate of 21.25 per cent on household premiums. Pauline Springett

air travel will rise to £20. Mr Brackenbury said this would force the travel industry to reduce the number of holidays and increase prices.

British Midland said it was extremely disappointed by the duty increase. "We have always maintained that air passenger duty is discriminatory against airlines, which increasingly compete with other transport modes, both in the UK and Europe," a spokesman commented.

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Enforcement

Crackdown on fraud aims to claw back £7bn

Labour claims credit for strategy
VAT loopholes and fraud targeted

THE centrepiece of the Chancellor's Budget balancing act is an anti-fraud crackdown which he claimed would raise nearly £7 billion over three years.

In what Mr Clarke described as a "spend to save" programme, the Government will invest £300 million tackling tax- and VAT-dodging, and security cheats.

Justifying his optimistic prediction for public borrowing, the Chancellor promised to make up the revenue shortfall that had thrown this year's forecasts into disarray.

"There does seem to be an increasing tendency to exploit loopholes and use special reliefs in an artificial way to reduce tax bills. Those sort of tax cuts are unacceptable. In this Budget I will propose a number of measures to stem tax leakage, to protect the ordinary taxpayer and make sure we get the right tax from the right people."

Labour leader Tony Blair claimed Mr Clarke was relying on a strategy first suggested by shadow chancellor Gordon Brown and ridiculed by the Tories at the time.

"Thousands of civil servants are being drafted into the war on fraud. Customs is to employ an extra 300 personnel and retain a further 1,100 posts, and Inland Revenue is redeploying 1,000 officers.

Customs & Excise and Inland Revenue officials will be allowed to swap information with the Department of Social Security, a move that will alarm civil liberties bodies. The Government has also targeted a number of long-standing concessions or gaps in the tax laws.

Electrical retailers in particular will be hit by the application of VAT to product warranties. Foreign banks will see their VAT-avoidance schemes stopped.

On income tax, the Government is tightening the rules covering transfer of assets abroad.

The Budget forecast that



Window shopping... the Chancellor hopes the tills continue to ring in the run-up to Christmas PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Value added tax

More work for Customs officers

Equal treatment over unpaid taxes

THE Chancellor defused a fierce row with business by changing the rules for how long Customs & Excise can reclaim back taxes, cutting the period from six to three years.

His surprise move could force Customs to recruit more staff — just after giving early retirement to experienced officers.

The row erupted in the summer, when the Government moved to block claims

from businesses for VAT mistakes dating back to the introduction of the tax in 1978, which could have amounted to tens of billions of pounds. A three-year limit was announced with immediate effect in July and will be legislated for in the Finance Bill.

The business world exploded with indignation at the overnight imposition of the limit, penalising companies whose repayment claims had been submitted but not agreed with Customs & Excise. Criticism was aimed particularly at the way Customs could still claim taxes from companies going back six years.

Mr Clarke surprised the tax world when he announced yesterday that he recognised the imbalance was wrong, and that it would be corrected by reducing the claim period allowed to Customs from six to three years.

"Government must not only be fair — it must be seen to be fair," he said.

"I have therefore decided that Customs' right to claim unpaid tax, in cases where no fraud or malpractice is involved, should be restricted to three years."

Legal cases will continue in the European Court to challenge the block on cases not agreed by July, but the Budget move placates critics.

Mike Fountain of accountancy firm Coopers & Lybrand said: "It was a surprise. It seems to be an admission that back claims are higher than the Customs has admitted, so they have decided to give up the smaller number."

Alan Bucket of Binder Hamlyn said: "I would have preferred both periods to have been six years."

He said the move would necessitate more Customs officers being hired so that businesses could be visited more frequently. Roger Cowe

Little pain, little gain

Names: Sean and Amanda Bellamy
Status: married, both working, expecting a baby
Homes: Totnes, Devon



SEAN and Amanda Bellamy can enjoy the prospect of having more money in their pockets as they await the arrival of their first child thanks to the cut in the basic rate of tax and changes in personal allowances.

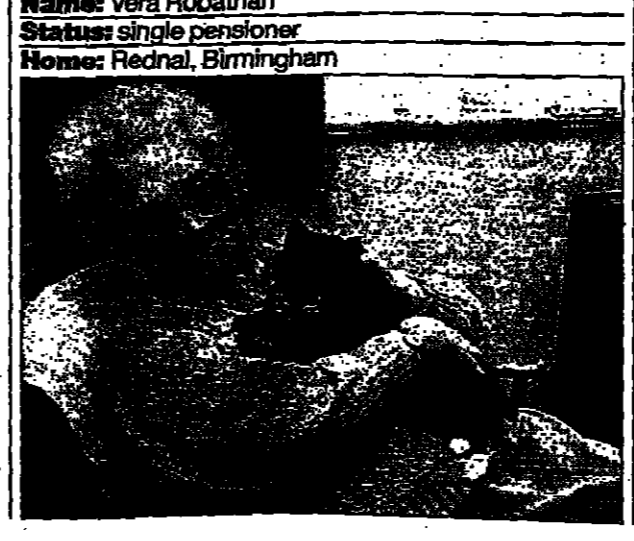
But the two south Devon teachers were left unimpressed by the overall shape of the Chancellor's package and have no intention of changing their strong Labour allegiance.

Neither smokes, and they drink only rarely. But the couple, who live in a three-bedroom terraced cottage in Totnes, are concerned about inexorably rising food bills and will be hit by increased insurance, tax and petrol costs for their seven-year-old car.

Amanda earns £20,000 a year as an infant teacher in Brixham. Sean, a more mod-

Pensioners let down

Names: Vera Robathan
Status: single pensioner
Homes: Rednal, Birmingham



PENSIONER Vera Robathan does not pay income tax, yet off abroad, swig also-pop or expect to inherit a pot of cash. So the budget did not touch her for good or ill.

Mrs Robathan's only source of income is her state pension of £7.12 plus about £10 a week from her late husband's pension. "Tax cuts are no use to me at all," she lamented. "I don't earn enough to pay tax."

"Mr Clarke doesn't seem to have mentioned pensioners at all. I'm very disappointed."

She pays £31 a week for her privately rented home in Rednal, Birmingham, but does not smoke, drive a car or eat sweets (she is a diabetic). And she certainly does not drink.

"Pensions are now linked to the retail price index,"

Profit-related pay

Sharing ethos is discarded

CONCESSION will be phased out

QUESTION mark hangs over whether firms or employees will carry the cost of the Chancellor's planned phasing out of profit-related pay tax breaks, which affect more than 3.5 million workers.

Kenneth Clarke yesterday announced the withdrawal of the special tax relief initiative, launched 10 years ago to encourage companies to peg pay more closely to the success of the underlying business.

At present, up to £4,000 of salary paid under a qualifying scheme is tax-free. But Mr Clarke said this limit would remain only until the end of next year. Then the tax threshold would be scaled back to £2,000 a year before being abolished by the turn of the century.

The accountancy firm Coopers & Lybrand says there will be huge confusion about whether the employer or the employee will carry the cost of the loss of tax relief. For a top-rate taxpayer the advantage can be worth up to £1,600 a year while the gain to a basic-rate taxpayer is £960. Many firms have encouraged their staff to switch to profit-related pay schemes.

Other leading firms last night criticised the move,

which will yield up to £3.1 billion in savings by the year 2000.

Stuart Hampson, chairman of the John Lewis Partnership, said it was "deeply disappointing" that, at a time when shareholders' excess is being so widely criticised, the Chancellor has decided to tax a scheme which pushed profit out to everyone.

Peter Jarvis, chief executive of Whitbread, said he believed in "linking rewards to the profit of a company".

The MSF union condemned the move as "a major own-goal by the Government", adding: "It was they who set up this tax dodge, and 3.7 million people fell for it. Now the very same government is double-crossing them. This move is a total admission of failure — a number of PRP schemes will now collapse."

TUC general secretary John Monks said: "Profit-related pay has been a large loophole, with some people gaining considerably while others, for example public sector workers, lost out to this tax relief."

The Chancellor unveiled plans to encourage employers getting tax breaks by paying their staff with company shares — a scheme widely used by City financial firms. This loophole saves an employer 10 per cent because such share payments are exempt from national insurance. Patrick Donovan

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

As Brent Star moulders in a fjord, European Union ponders the vast cost of decommissioning all redundant offshore installations Oil firms face £13bn clean-up bill

Celia Weston
Industrial Correspondent

EUROPE'S oil and gas companies face a £13.6 billion bill for disposing of offshore rigs and platforms in the wake of the resurgence of the political controversy which dogged the Brent Spar.

This is the key finding of a confidential report commissioned for the European Union's environment and energy directives, seen by the Guardian, and discussed at a private meeting last week. It details concerns about the fate of more than 1,600 offshore installations, most of which will end their life within 30 years.

Estimates in the 600-page report put costs at £13.6 billion for removing steel structures alone, excluding concrete base substructures and the disposal costs of floating

seen to take a hard line. But information in the report will also be available to the Oslo/Paris commission (OsPar), which controls the rules for dumping and waste disposal at sea and includes all European countries.

Other European Union commissioners are only likely to back a call from Mrs Bjerregaard to get tough on the oil companies through legislation if OsPar's decisions are seen as not hard-line enough.

The sea-based activity working group of OsPar is due to consider the rules for decommissioning offshore installations at its meeting on December 2. Its recommendations will be put to the full commission meeting next June.

The oil and gas industry will continue to argue that disposal at sea should not be ruled out as an option — including the possibility of turning rigs into reef-like havens for sea life.

It is forecast that, at peak, 25 installations will be abandoned each year

production facilities. The study estimates a cash outlay of £530 million to £606 million each year for 25 years.

Such reports are commonly used as a prelude to the European Commission preparing legislation. Difficulties for the exploration and production companies would increase if the EU decided it was politically expedient to legislate to limit the disposal methods companies are allowed to use.

The report says: "Typically oil and gas fields have an economic life of 20 to 40 years and it therefore follows that a much larger decommissioning programme will be required over the next decades, predicted to peak during the period 2010 to 2020."

It forecasts that this will mean about 25 installations being abandoned each year during that peak period.

EU environment commissioner Ritt Bjerregaard, who intervened energetically during the Brent Spar oil storage buoy controversy, wants to be

Even before Brent Spar, still lodged in a Norwegian fjord pending a decision on its fate, the industry argued that any decision on suitable disposal options should be made on a case-by-case assessment.

The UK Offshore Operators' Association said last night the industry "remained committed to finding the right balance between the risk to human health and safety, environmental impact, technical feasibility, economic considerations and public concern."

There was no such thing as a typical installation, a spokesman said, so no single method of disposal would be suitable for all.

The report says that bordering EU states there are 620 offshore oil and gas platforms, 430 sub-sea structures and 600 sub-sea wellheads.

Established international conventions specify the total removal of smaller structures in shallow water — anything weighing less than 4,000 tonnes excluding deck and superstructure sited in less than 75 metres of water.

The report concedes that it could be difficult to remove the concrete substructures of offshore platforms. "Except for a scale model test, no experience exists in this area," it says, but concludes that the industry is technically capable of safely removing most steel platforms and sub-sea structures entirely.



Platform for protest... Greenpeace in action on Shell's redundant Brent Spar buoy. If environmentalists have their way, operators will face decommissioning bills of £13bn or more

Grid slices ever deeper into staffing

Power firm accused of putting profit before safety as more jobs go, writes Chris Barrie

THE National Grid was accused yesterday of placing power supplies in jeopardy by ordering drastic job cuts to fund higher pay-outs to shareholders.

The Grid runs the electricity transmission system in England and Wales. It intends to cut 750 jobs, 50 per cent more than originally planned, in order to protect profits from tough price caps imposed last summer by the industry watchdog, Prof Stephen Littlechild.

The move will reduce the workforce by 17 per cent to 4,113 people and comes on top of 1,500 job cuts since privatisation. The latest cuts were announced as the Grid turned in a 12.7 per cent drop in pre-tax profits of £392.7 million on £712.4 million turnover.

Unions condemned the job losses and the Grid's decision to raise the pay-out to shareholders by 8.3 per cent to 4.15p a share, at a total cost of 575 million.

Sol Misad, deputy head of energy at the Union trade union, said employees were bearing the brunt of tough regulatory decisions by Prof

Littlechild while shareholders escaped their impact.

Warning that British Gas had made hefty job cuts only to see a slide in standards of service to the public, Mr Misad said: "The Grid has kept the lights on so far, but the more you cut staff, the more the margin of safety slips."

The cuts come as part of the Grid's plan to reduce costs by 6 per cent a year, the upper limit of the assessment made by Prof Littlechild in setting price controls in August.

Grid chairman David Jeffries said the company's decision to accept Prof Littlechild's review, which was condemned by the company initially, had "removed a major uncertainty".

He was unapologetic for placing shareholders at the top of the pecking order. In setting dividends and looking at the Grid's financial strength, the directors would ensure shareholder returns "remain their priority".

The half-year results were depressed by lower turnover in the core transmission business. But, stripping out the effect of demerging the pumped storage business and higher interest charges arising from financing costs linked to customer rebates, pre-tax profits rose by 4.9 per cent. Enersis, the company's telecoms subsidiary, had revenues of £43 million, a 174 per cent increase, and cut its operating loss by 34.4 per cent to £30.3 million.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.00	France 8.36	Italy 2.481	Singapore 2.29
Austria 17.30	Germany 2.4750	Malta 0.58	South Africa 7.49
Belgium 50.92	Greece 392.45	Netherlands 2.7800	Spain 208.00
Canada 2.1960	Hong Kong 12.62	New Zealand 2.29	Sweden 10.96
Cyprus 0.7470	India 59.71	Norway 10.47	Switzerland 2.18
Denmark 9.54	Ireland 0.97	Portugal 250.50	Turkey 183.258
Finland 7.91	Israel 5.82	Saudi Arabia 6.24	USA 1.6370

Pearson gains best-sellers in US takeover

PEARSON, the media and entertainment group, is paying £200 million to buy Putnam Berkley, the American publisher whose top authors include Dick Francis, Patricia Cornwell, Tom Clancy and Kurt Vonnegut.

The deal, Pearson's second big publishing takeover this year, will give the combined group a 12 per cent share of the crucial US market and turn Pearson's publishing subsidiary, Penguin, into a "powerhouse in both the frontlist and backlist", according to Michael Lynton, Penguin's chief executive designate.

There were concerns in the City that the acquisition might turn out to be miss-timed. The consumer books market is, according to analysts, heading into "reverse" which could result in poorer profits.

But Mr Lynton — the former Disney executive who takes the helm at Penguin at the end of the year — said Penguin USA and Putnam had outstripped the industry's average growth rate and sales were looking "healthy and robust".

There should also be cost savings of about \$20 million a year from the acquisition which will increase Pearson's share of trade book sales in America to 12 per cent. A one-off integration charge of between \$5 million and \$10 million is expected.

Putnam Berkley is being sold by the entertainment giant, MCA, in which North American drinks group Seagram has an 80 per cent shareholding. It is understood the company wants to concentrate on its film and music businesses and is reluctant to invest sufficient capital or management time to continue to expand in book publishing.

Mr Lynton said Penguin and Putnam complemented each other "extremely well in terms of both authors and people". Although Penguin's catalogue of contemporary authors includes Stephen King, the company is regarded as highly dependent on its back catalogue of classic writers.

Putnam has more popular contemporary writers.

The deal entrenches Pearson's position in trade publishing which some analysts had speculated might be jettisoned by the company because of growing competition. Recently, the British group has appeared more interested in professional and educational publishing where profit margins are more attractive. Earlier this year it acquired HarperCollins Educational from Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation for \$580 million.

Swiss bank's European HQ moves to London

SWITZERLAND'S biggest bank, Union Bank of Switzerland, is moving the management of its Europe region, which includes the Middle East and Africa, from Zurich to London. The region will be run by David Robins, currently chief executive at UBS UK.

The move, announced yesterday, came as the bank revealed that it is to take a £1.44 billion charge against possible future domestic debt, and will chop back its branch network in Switzerland with the loss of 800 jobs.

The changes, which underline the country's economic plight, will push the bank into the red to the tune of 500 million Swiss francs (£333 million) this year.

The switch to London is to some extent symbolic because operations such as corporate finance, equities, fixed income and derivatives are already carried out from the City. However, it is likely to be taken as a clear signal that UBS regards itself as an international rather than a Swiss bank.

It is also likely to boost morale among staff within the international business who feel their efforts have been overshadowed by the problems of the domestic banking business in Switzerland. Mr Robins will become the third non-Swiss member of the bank's group executive board.

Announcing the decision to make provision against the risk of future losses, UBS chief executive Mathis Caballavetta said: "Shareholders can be sure that group results will be significantly stronger in the years ahead, as new unexpected provisions will no longer be a constraint on earnings."

UBS said it would close 90 of its 265 branches in Switzerland, and the bank is planning to reduce the number of regions into which its Swiss business is organised from 31 to eight.

The reorganisation is expected to cost about 120 million Swiss francs and produce annual savings of 200 million Swiss francs.

The Swiss banking industry has seen a series of initiatives this year as the big players seek to reduce costs in the fiercely competitive market.

Back in April UBS rejected a merger approach from CS Holdings on the grounds that such a move would "place great strain on financial and management resources". In July CS Holdings announced its own restructuring with the loss of 5,000 jobs worldwide, including 3,500 in Switzerland.

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David Robins

Severn Trent to buy back shares

SEVERN Trent, the country's largest privatised water group, is to press ahead with proposals to buy back up to 10 per cent of its shares in a move that would cost about £274 million at the current market price.

The group's plan to enhance shareholder value through a takeover of South West Water was blocked at the end of last month by Trade and Industry Secretary Ian Lang on advice from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The Severn Trent board won shareholder approval for a buy-back at the last annual meeting but decided not to go ahead with the scheme while it was pursuing South West Water.

The board said yesterday that it would start buying shares "as soon as is appropriate". It also intends to seek to renew its powers to repurchase capital, at the annual meeting in July 1997.

It is following the example of a number of water companies in returning funds to shareholders before a Labour government could impose the threatened windfall tax on privatised utilities.

Severn Trent, the main water and sewerage group in the Midlands, yesterday reported that first-half pre-tax profits rose 4.2 per cent to £197 million after £4.5 million of exceptional costs related to its bid for SWW. The interim dividend rises 14.1 per cent to 10.5p net a share.

Chief executive Vic Cocker said the group's capital requirement for business growth was relatively modest but he pointed out that it had committed an extra £70 million to new investment in water services.

The non-regulated Biffa waste management business produced "excellent results" with profits up by almost 13 per cent.

Frank Dobson, shadow environment secretary, said: "Severn Trent is now making £744 profit out of its customers every single minute of the day."

At the same time, the group's capital investment, was at its lowest level since privatisation in 1988.

Portillo lifts hopes of German order for Eurofighter

DEDEFENCE Secretary Michael Portillo yesterday raised hopes for safeguarding up to 100,000 British jobs by declaring himself "pretty confident" about Germany's commitment to the four-nation Eurofighter project.

Mr Portillo's comments, made in the Commons, came after a meeting last week with Volker Rühle, his German counterpart, who is understood to be ready to announce a firm German order for 180 aircraft early next year.

"I am pretty confident now about the attitude of the German administration, but of course, it does have to go through the Bundestag and you can never take parliamentary votes for granted," Mr Portillo said, referring to stiff German opposition to the £2 billion Eurofighter project.

Mr Rühle is negotiating with Theo Waigel, finance minister, and Dasa, the German participant in the Eurofighter project, about details of funding the production phase. This is due to begin in Britain, which is ordering 232 aircraft, early in 1997.

But Germany, struggling to cut public spending and the budget deficit in order to qualify for the single European currency, is likely to draw up a three-year programme to fund initial production. The overwhelming bulk of the money would be committed in the 1998 and 1999 budgets.

British Aerospace will build the aircraft at Watlington and Sandesbury in Lancashire, and Brough, Humberside. Engines will be provided by Rolls-Royce's Bristol plant.

The defence ministry reckons the Eurofighter project will create 18,000 jobs directly and 84,000 indirectly but export orders could boost the total gain to 300,000.

صلى الله عليه وسلم

Cricket

Australia v West Indies: first Test, final day

Bevan overturns Windies

Mike Selvey in Brisbane

PERSONAL achievement, said Ian Healy after the first Test finished at The Gabba yesterday, is all very nice but nothing beats the feeling of having fought a good fight and won. For Australia it was sweetness itself as they clipped and chivvied away at West Indies' batting until, five deliveries into the final hour, Glenn McGrath, in his 30th over, fired the ball into Kenny Benjamin's pads and saw his weary appeal upheld to give Australia victory by 123 runs.

West Indies had started the final day on 89 for one, with Sherwin Campbell and Brian Lara at the crease, and nurtured genuine hopes of

AUSTRALIA First innings 479 (I Healy 161 not out)

WEST INDIES First innings 277 (C Hooper 102)

AUSTRALIA Second innings 217-6 (McC 104)

WEST INDIES Second innings (overnight 88-7)

I Campbell	118
R Samuels	25
G Lara	25
C Hooper	25
S Chandernagore	14
I Adams	14
C Browne	10
I Bishop	10
C Ambrose	7
K Benjamin	7
J Walsh	not out
Extras (nb7, lb, 10)	18

Total (108.6 overs) 239

Fall of wickets: 84, 118, 154, 187, 222, 241, 257, 263

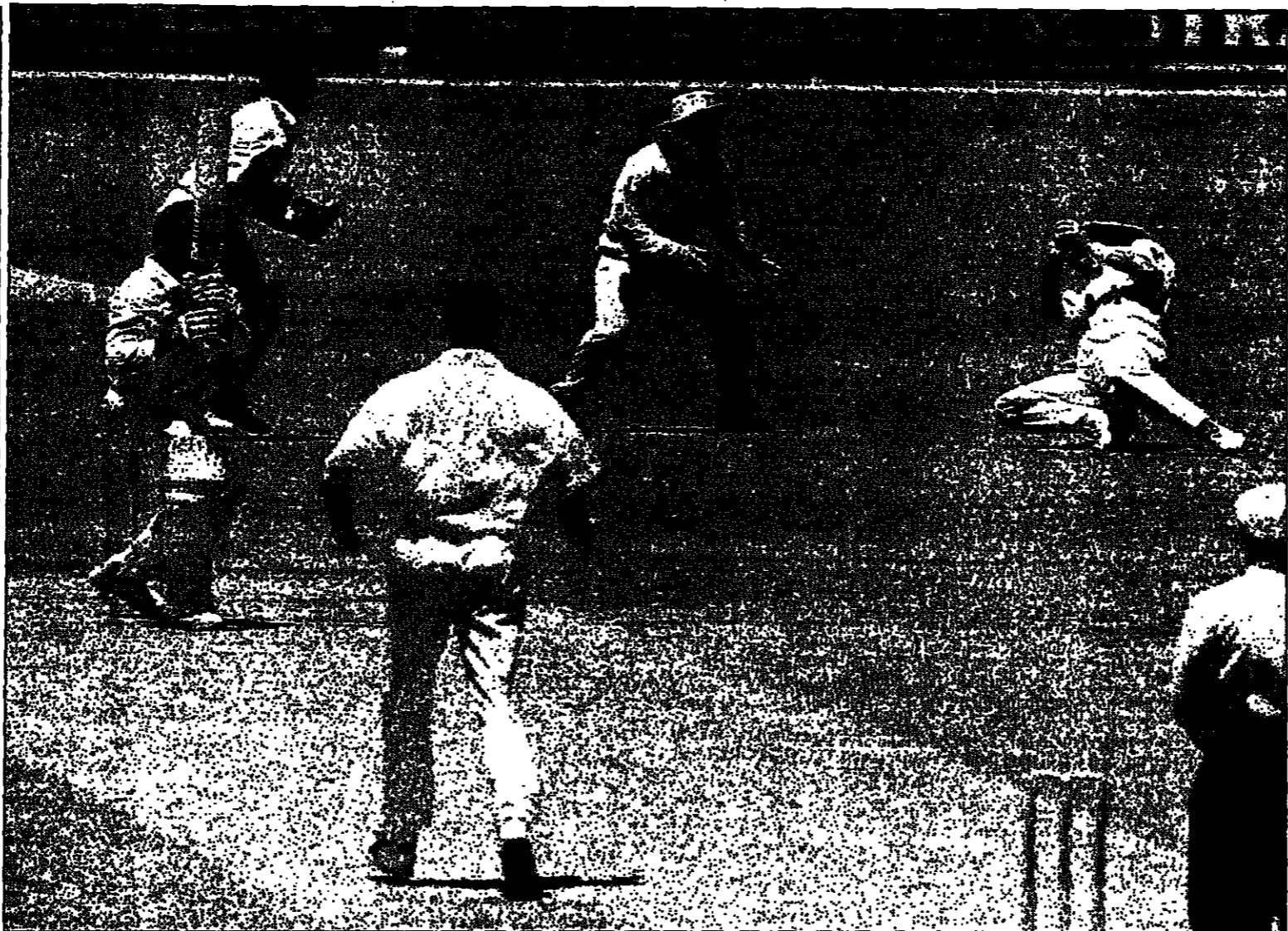
Bowling: G McGrath 29.5-15-80-4; M Thompson 13.0-5-2; P Foster 16.0-2-1; S Warne 41.10-52-2; M Bevan 14.5-4-3.

Australia won by 123 runs.

knocking off the remaining 331 runs they required. Instead triumph and disappointment sat alongside each other.

To Campbell went the glory, as he batted almost to the end of the match — he was ninth out after more than six hours — to score his second Test century. It was a composed, mature effort which promised even better things to come. On the way he passed 1,000 Test runs in only his 30th innings, and even Lara required one more than that.

The rest disappointed. There was no collapse this time, just a steady decline as batsmen played themselves in but failed to make Australia pay. Until Benjamin, everyone, even Jimmy Adams, who is playing more like Grizly Adams, had spent at least half an hour at the crease but only Lara, whose 44 occupied 95 minutes, was able to keep



Casualty of Waugh... Brian Lara deflects Reiffel's bullet to second slip where Mark Waugh holds firm under fire to bag the catch. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID MUNDEN

Campbell company for more than an hour. Only 10 minutes more from each batsman and the match would have been saved. As it was, a final score of 286 meant that West Indies had to look back 11 innings, to Perth and the final match of their last series here, to find when they last reached 300 against Australia.

To their enormous credit Australia, who after being put in had survived a torrid first morning when the ball regularly beat the bat, had the patience to bowl out West Indies first time round and then kept going on the final day when the pitch, normally a dusty ally to Shane Warne by that stage, still held together.

Test arena, found spin only from the bowlers' footmarks and managed only two wickets in 41 overs.

Instead wickets came from other sources. McGrath had a wonderful series in the Caribbean 18 months ago and has begun well here with four for 60 yesterday and six for 92 in the match. But the real surprise came from Michael Bevan with some viciously spun and bouncy Chinaman and googlies. Australia's captain Mark Taylor said that he had always had it in mind to give the left-hander a bowl to take the pressure off Warne, but he would surely not have expected the response that brought three for 41, including the wicket of Campbell.

However, the key dismissal of Lara was credited to Paul Reiffel, and was a gem that preceded some unmitigated rubbish. Lara's intentions had been clear, with some searing, unstoppable early strokes. But in his first over of the day Reiffel, not for the first time, slanted the ball across the left-hander, who sent an edge like a shell to Mark Waugh at second slip. The force of the catch knocked the fielder off his feet but Waugh does not drop such chances. Reiffel, who had conceded seven runs in his previous two deliveries, had the grace to look embarrassed.

This was the day, though, that Campbell joined the big league. He had made his maiden Test century in his previous match, scoring 228 against New Zealand in Bridgetown, but that will pale compared with this effort. He had looked nervy on Monday evening and suspect outside the off stump, his footwork twitchy rather than purposeful. But yesterday he dug deep, defended solidly, saw the ball early but played it late, and significantly, coped with Warne. Only when Taylor gave the second new ball to Reiffel did Campbell become extravagant, taking 10 from the first over to reach 97, before he eased McGrath through midwicket to reach his hundred.

The remaining batsmen had been instrumental in their own downfalls. In particular, Hooper might have taken longer than three balls to assess Bevan's merits before trying to sweep, and Chandernagore's loose drive as McGrath went round the wicket will not stand as a beacon in his career.

Neither side escaped unscathed for the second Test beginning in Sydney in two days' time. Australia have called up Greg Blewett, probably because of his capacity to bowl some seam, rather than Stuart Law to replace the injured Steve Waugh, and have added another leg-spinner, Peter McIntyre, to the squad. West Indies meanwhile have some concern over Benjamin's left knee.

Silverwood awaits his big chance

Daniel Roberts in Harare finds musical England are on the same wavelength

THE last time a full England team visited these parts, some 52 years ago, this city was called Salisbury. And you can bet your life that four of the party did not turn up clutching guitars. The wives are not being allowed on this tour, so the chaps must have something to do when it rains.

The melodic qualities of England's very own Fab Four — John Crawley, Alan Mullally, Andrew Caddick and the physiotherapist Wayne Morton — are open to question but there can be no disputing the squad's determination to succeed against Zimbabwe and New Zealand in the next 100 days.

The traditional travelling garb of four blazers and flannels was abandoned in favour of formal dark suits. "To send the message that we are here on serious business", said the team coach David Lloyd.

Little has been left to chance and the players believe they have never been fitter. Each was given an individual training programme culminating in a week of lung-bursting exercise in Portugal this month. They even have a fitness guru, a Kiwi called Dean Riddle who also works with Leeds Rugby League Club.

Dominic Cork's absence while he sorts out his marital problems has reduced the party to 14. It will actually be 13 until Graham Thorpe arrives tomorrow, after the birth of his son last week. Lloyd believes this is enough bodies for the task and has nominated Chris Silverwood of Yorkshire as the sort of player to take advantage of such a slim squad.

Darren Gough, Caddick, Mullally and Silverwood are the only specialist quick bowlers and the likelihood is that at least three will play in the Tests. Lloyd said: "Silverwood should be rubbing his hands at the chance. It is a terrific opportunity for the lad. He is 21, we have identified his talent and now he can force his way into or close to the Test team."

Silverwood, a black belt in karate, can scarcely comprehend his ascent. "A few months ago," he said, "my ambition was to gain a regular place in the Yorkshire side. Now I've leapt above several other fine young bowlers and I'm on an England tour. This is a wonderful chance and I aim to do anything I can to take it."

Lloyd was here last winter as coach of the England Under-19 squad, so his rise has been similarly rapid. He described the practice facilities at the Alexandra Sports Club as "adequate" and the team will have nets in the mornings and afternoons of the next two days.

Whether Michael Atherton will join them is debatable because the captain went straight to bed with a sore throat as soon as the team arrived at their city-centre hotel.

The slowness of life may become England's main frustration before they leave on January 5; and not just the pitches for the Test matches, which could be funeral. Red tape seems to wind itself round most things. Just ask the sports photographers. Their equipment, which runs into tens of thousands of pounds, was confiscated by customs officials at the airport on the pretext that they might sell it to the locals. Ten hours later, and after much pleading with the Ministry of Information, Minister of Immigration and British High Commission, they finally got it back.

Fast-man Follett joins Northants

THE fast bowler David Follett has joined Northamptonshire on a two-year contract after deciding to leave Middlesex for domestic reasons. The 29-year-old headed Middlesex's County Championship bowling averages in 1996 with 23 wickets at 19.91 but made

only four appearances because of a shin injury.

Martin Speight has asked Sussex to release him so that he can start keeping wicket again. The hard-hitting batsman insists he has not been influenced by the recent departures of high-profile players at Hove.

RAC Rally

Back to reality after three days in the dream machine

Maurice Hamilton tacked Killer Kielder and survived to tell the tale as he took the Fleet Street award for the first journalist home

IT WAS crisp, bright and still in Cheshire yesterday morning. The perfect conditions increased the sense of disbelief that the events of the previous three days had happened and the Guardian/Observer car had actually finished the Network Q RAC Rally, never mind the bonus of taking 38th place and the Fleet Street award for the first journalist home.

When Tony Jardine and I had set off from our tempo-

rary headquarters three days previously, the countryside was coated in snow and a biting wind warned of trouble ahead when we started the first leg in Northumberland.

Even so, the treacherous conditions went far beyond our worst fears. Running in 90th position, we were ideally placed to see the mistakes of others as we picked our way past damaged and abandoned cars deep in Kielder Forest.

It was clear that finishing

the first day would automatically move us up the leaderboard, but the difficulty was staying on a road which was coated in ice, polished to a dangerous degree by the cars that had passed through. The fact that we had only one spin was a tribute to the driver's skills.

If anything the conditions made my job as co-driver much easier, the slow speeds allowing the reading of notes at a pedestrian pace. Al-

though Saturday was exceptionally demanding, the hard work was yet to come.

The second leg, an apparently straightforward mix of short stages in the grounds of stately homes, provided many traps even for the wary, as two wrecked cars, previously in the top 10, proved with dramatic effect. By Sunday night we were in 50th place and very relieved to be there.

The adverse conditions also put a massive strain on the organisers as the train of cars and support vehicles tackled the 1,100-mile route, and yet the event somehow ran smoothly.

The marshals, soaked and cold as they manned the forest stages, were unpaid, one of the few rewards being the RAC Insurance Services stickers handed out by my PR-conscious sponsor as he thought of our sponsor and the £20,000 bill at the end of the three days. All of which made finishing even more imperative and a nagging thought as we sat waiting for Monday's first stage at 6am.

We were never so glad to see rain, because it meant no more snow or ice. Finally we could get down to business on the fast, sweeping forest

roads in Mid and North Wales. Such had been the frustration of the previous two days that the thought of cruising home to a finish never entered our heads. Having worked up to the RAC Rally in minor events, and having spent five days on the reconnaissance, we desperately wanted to put the preparation and training into practice.

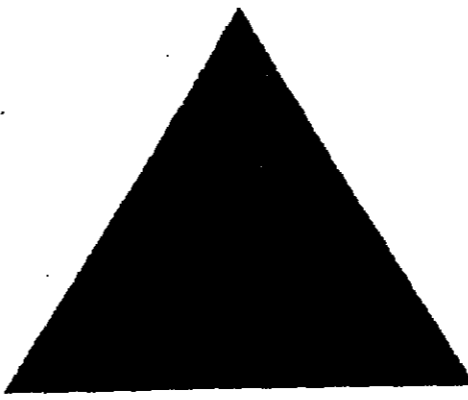
The first stage was unsatisfactory as we both stumbled and stuttered, unaccustomed to the dramatic increase in pace and distance. But by mid-morning the partnership was working brilliantly, our



White lightning... the Guardian's man helps set the pace. Escort Cosworth taking a merciless beating as we moved through the field. Such was the sense of elation and satisfaction that thoughts of backing off to reach the finish only became part of the tactical approach on the final stage. It had all seemed like a fast-moving dream. Eighteen hours later, the feeling of warmth and well-being was due to more than the morning sun.



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14 SPORTS NEWS

Racing

Flyer back on song thanks to Powell

Graham Flock

DUBLIN FLYER swept aside memories of his slip in the Murphys' Gold Cup at Cheltenham with an impressive victory in the Peterborough Chase at Huntingdon yesterday, despite a blunder at the last fence which tested Brendan Powell's horsemanship to the full.

Favoured by the race conditions, Dublin Flyer started at 4-9, but Richard Dunwoody set out to make the running at a cracking pace on Gales Cavalier, and for most of the race tended to lead a half mile in front of the crowd with an exhibition of jumping, taking each fence stride for stride.

Dunwoody clung to the inside, determined to save every inch, but on the turn for home Dublin Flyer was going palpably the better. He jumped the second-last a length in front and had drawn clear approaching the final fence. Here he made his sole mistake, falling to get high enough, and for a stride or so those who had laid the odds held their breath, but Powell sat tight and the favourite recovered to gallop clear.

The official winning distance of 18 lengths gave scant indication of the closeness of the duel until the straight. Tim Forster, who trains the winner, was delighted to say: "He doesn't like going right-handed, and is not the same horse in any shape or form. Brendan said he couldn't really ask him to jump properly."

The winner's aversion to a right-handed course suggests that Dublin Flyer might not be asked to contest the King George VI Chase round Kempton's sharp turns, but Forster did not rule out a crack at the Grand National.

"The owner, John Sumner, has not been beaten so far, but he'll do what I tell him — he has for the last 32 years," said Forster.

Forster, Sumner thinks the Tripleprint Gold Cup at Cheltenham next month might come too soon, and Dublin Flyer might go next to Wetherby for the Rowland Meyrick Chase on Boxing Day.

Gales Cavalier ran as well as might have been expected conceding the winner 9lb in a handicap he would have been set to receive a similar amount — and nine lengths behind the runner-up came David Nicholson's smart chaser Kadi, who was staying on well in the closing stages.

Kadi ran respectably considering he had not been seen since finishing runner-up to Banjo at Aintree last year, and he is worth bearing in mind for a decent handicap chase in the near future.

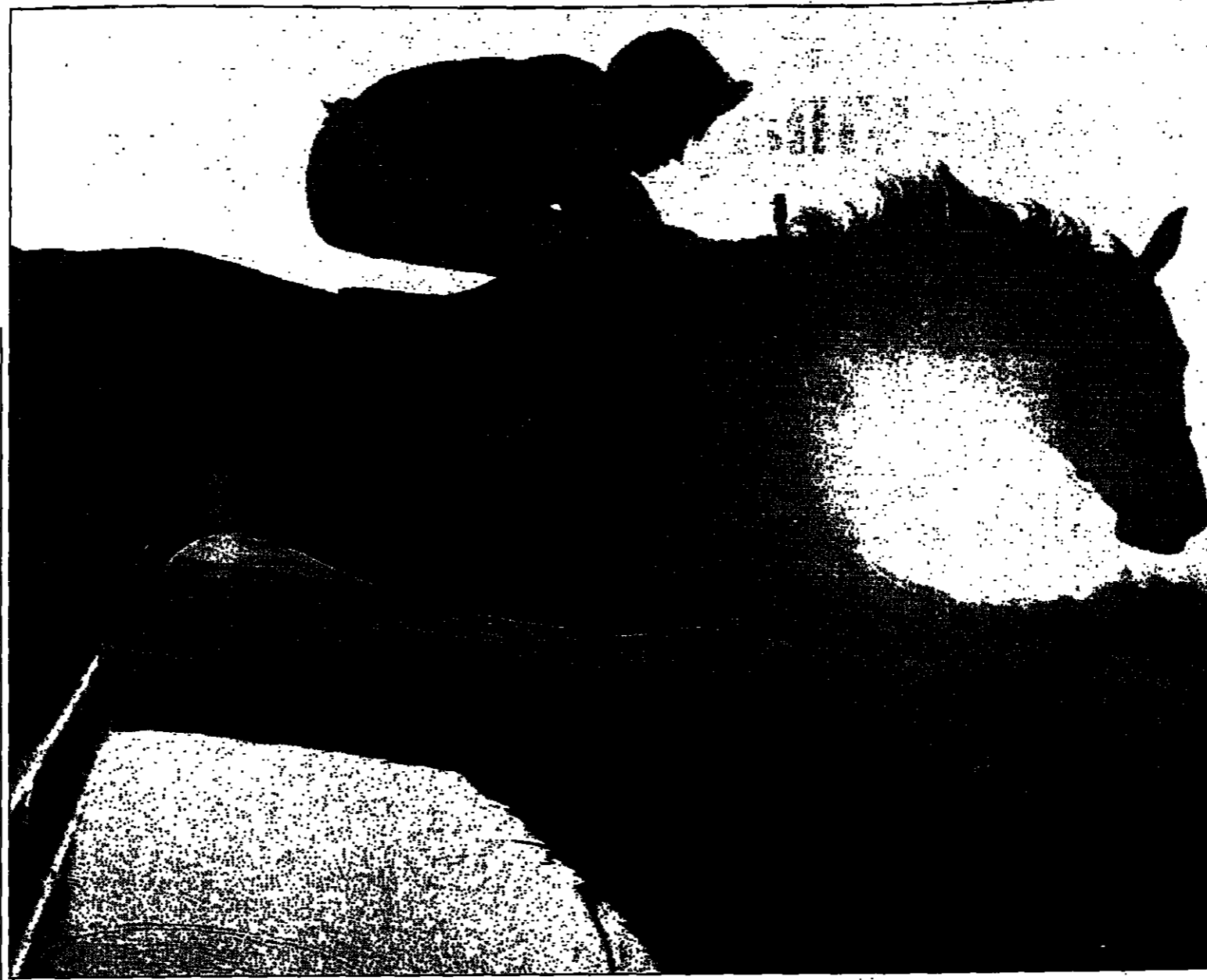
Toady McCooey completed a double for Forster when Tienen easily defied top weight in the Tote Handicap Hurdle, the champion jockey had driven from Cheltenham, where he had been expected to write the opening race on Courbaril.

His mount found little under pressure, though, and was readily beaten by Blase Away, partnered by Jamie Osborne, who went on to complete a double when Pongo Waring took the Lansdown Handicap Chase.

Hopes that the American challenger Serenity Prayer might win the four qualifying races required to earn a \$1 million bonus were dashed when in the third leg of the Sport of Kings Challenge, the Newcut Hurdle, he failed to catch Mandys Maritino.

Although schooled over English hurdles in America, Serenity Prayer's jumping cost him his chance. He lost ground at most of the obstacles, and despite rallying after the final flight, the American hurdler could not close back the deficit.

It was a useful performance by Joseph Chiffon's winner, mabian in six races, who was competing over a distance short of his best. Oatis Rose will have her backers with just 16lb to Richard Johnson on board. Although beaten 18 lengths into third place behind Sparkling Yasmin and Holdimicos at Newton Abbot last week, Oatis Rose ran very well until tiring over the last three flights and was not punished when it was clear she could not beat the first two.



Sunny side up... Kadi puts in a good jump at the water on his way to finishing third in the Peterborough Chase at Huntingdon. PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

Rose to bloom with stamina at a premium

Ron Cox

OATIS ROSE, 33-1 winner in testing ground set at Newbury last season, will find conditions right up her street in the Independent Insurance Handicap Hurdle at Chesham today.

Her stable struck with another 33-1 shot, Seek The Faith, on this corresponding card a year ago, but Oatis Rose will have her backers with just 16lb to Richard Johnson on board. Although beaten 18 lengths into third place behind Sparkling Yasmin and Holdimicos at Newton Abbot last week, Oatis Rose ran very well until tiring over the last three flights and was not punished when it was clear she could not beat the first two.

earlier won well on his debut. Nick Gaselee, Spinmaker's trainer, is a past master at getting his horses fit after a lay-off.

Charlie Morlock, former assistant to Nicky Henderson, got off the mark at 16-1 in his own right when God Speed You won at Wincanton recently. He could follow up with the well-handicapped Star Of Italy (2.45) in the Datchet Chase.

One of the top performers in his grade last season, Mighty Moss (1.25) looked the part when trotting up on his hurdling debut at Worcester. He is narrowly preferred.

At Windsor, Spinmaker (2.45) is fancied to overcome a lengthy absence in the Cranbourne Handicap Hurdle. Off the course all last season, this half-brother to Grand National winner Party Politics had

No tax relief from Clarke

PETER Savill, one of the most influential members of the Racehorse Owners' Association, was bitterly disappointed by Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's refusal to help racing in yesterday's budget, writes Graham Flock.

Blaming the British Horseracing Board and the Levy Board for signing racing's cause to that of bookmakers' cause to that of bookmakers' cause to that of bookmakers' cause, he said: "I thought there would be something in the budget, but I have always been concerned by the linking of racing's arguments with those of bookmakers and punters, which haven't held up to scrutiny. "If you're working towards a common goal then it makes sense, but the bookmakers have shown that they aren't. The strategy has to be rethought completely. "Racing has to look after its own industry; the professionals — owners, trainers and breeders — must work more closely together and take a more prominent role and not simply leave it to the administrators."

Tom Kelly, director general of the Betting Office Licensees' Association, representing the majority of betting shop proprietors, was also disappointed by the failure of the Chancellor to reduce betting duty, although he thought a more united approach might have helped.

"It is disappointing that the strength of the Bookmakers' Committee's argument has not succeeded," he said. "It might have been more productive if everyone had asked for a reduction to be passed on to the punter, and separate voices such as Peter Savill's cannot be helpful."

Bookmakers are expecting turnover to fall further when the weekly draw in the National Lottery is introduced next February. The Chancellor might have felt it was prudent to assess the impact of the new attraction before granting a reduction in betting duty for the second consecutive year.

Chepstow runners and riders with form

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Winner. Includes entries like '1.25 Mighty Moss', '1.55 Purfield', and '2.55 Oatis Rose (new)'.

Hexham

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Winner. Includes entries like '1.00 Chepstow', '1.30 Purfield', and '2.55 Oatis Rose (new)'.

Windsor

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Winner. Includes entries like '1.15 Chepstow', '1.45 Purfield', and '2.15 Oatis Rose (new)'.

Results

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Winner. Includes entries like '1.00 Chepstow', '1.30 Purfield', and '2.55 Oatis Rose (new)'.

Cheltenham

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Huntingdon

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Linfield

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Windsor

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Soccer

Coca-Cola Cup, fourth round: Wimbledon 1, Aston Villa 0

Gayle shows Villa an early exit

Davidacey

A DEFLECTED shot from Marcus Gayle shortly before half-time at Selhurst Park last night took Wimbledon towards only their second League Cup quarter-final and left the holders Aston Villa to rue a host of missed chances as well as the loss of Gareth Southgate, who was carried off with a knee injury towards the end.

Villa came to Selhurst with an impressive League Cup record. They were the present holders, they had won the trophy twice in the last three seasons, and only Liverpool had also won the tournament five times.

Villa's passing was always likely to be shorter and more studied than Wimbledon's direct, economical movements. They still used the full width of the pitch to extend the opposition at the back. And the ease with which Nelson was turning Wimbledon's defence on the right also gave Villa a distinct edge.

Oxford United 1, Southampton 1

Last-gasp Moody blues for struggling Saints

Jeremy Alexander

SOUTHAMPTON just about hung on to their self-esteem last night at the Manor Ground, but they did little to restore their confidence. In the last minute Oxford, who created more and better chances throughout, scored a deserved equaliser when Moody lashed the ball past Woods.

Moody was a substitute for the main culprit Aldridge for the last half-hour. In that time Purse and Mike Ford both scraped the bar with headers from crosses by Beauchamp. An equaliser was no less than just Oxford matched Southampton in all but Berkovic.

stincts could have been proved right if Aldridge had kept his bearings. First Angel, allowed advantage despite Van Gobbel's foul, pulled back from the by-line. Aldridge's shot cleared the stand. Then Beauchamp from the other side found him six yards out with Woods exposed on his line. Aldridge's header was an impressive clearance.

Ipswich Town 1, Gillingham 0

Suffolk punch floors Gills

Trevor Haggitt

THE Coca-Cola Cup continues to add a zip to Ipswich's season though for long periods it looked likely that Gillingham would have caused to celebrate another memorable giant-killing victory.

With Burley allowing him time for his repairs, Gillingham were given still more encouragement to press forward. Not that they needed it; as at Highfield Road, their adventure was exhilarating and just before Cundy's return after a 12-minute absence, Hesselbacher struck an inviting chance narrowly wide.

The substitution suggested that Ipswich's fortunes were about to improve as Thelen began raiding down the right. The second half started with Butler put in the clear but the finish was weak.

Team talk

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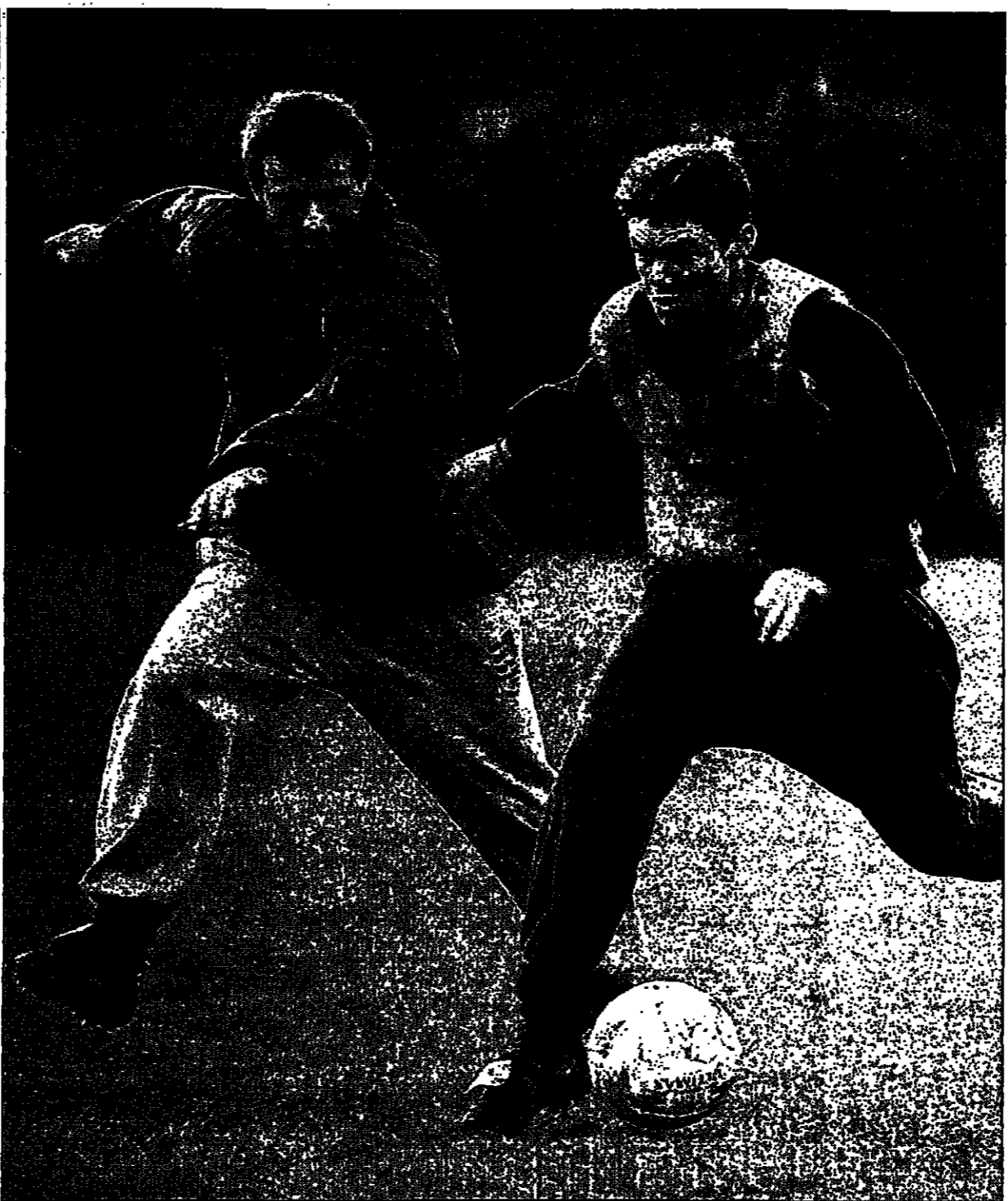
Table with 3 columns: Team, Score, Opponent. Includes Arsenal 0-0 Ipswich Town, Aston Villa 1-1 Leeds United, etc.

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Walker puts paid to Millwall

IN THE FA Cup first-round replays, Woking produced the shock of the night by defeating the Second Division leaders Millwall 1-0 at the New Den.



Clothes show... Claridge, left, regularly trains in old Cambridge or Birmingham kit

Leicester scruff hoping to give United a dressing down

Paul Weaver on Steve Claridge, a striker geared up for tonight's Coca-Cola Cup tie

IN THE Gucci and Armani-strewn world of the Premiership, Steve Claridge is not so much a fashion statement as a tight-lipped comment. His Leicester City manager Martin O'Neill describes this antithesis of Beau Brummell as the scruffiest forward in the division.

of Matsos Rosé. I was so pleased I took them home to my mum and dad but when we opened it we found the turkey was rotten.

Claridge did not find life much better at Cambridge. "It was the unhealthiest 2 1/2 years of my career. John Beck, the manager, was in favour of the long-ball game. We had 90 minutes of one-touch football. We were not allowed to pass back; we were told to boot it out of play. We were winning games and getting booted off."

Results section containing scores for various football leagues including the Coca-Cola Cup, Scottish League, and Nationwide League.

Juve on top of the world

JUVENTUS took time out from giving football lessons to Manchester United when they won the World Club Championship in Tokyo yesterday. Alessandro Del Piero scored the only goal in a scrappy 1-0 victory over River Plate of Argentina.

Di Livio's corner was flicked on to Del Piero lurking unmarked at the back of the penalty area and the young forward contrived the ball deftly before shooting into the far top corner of the net.

The Juve coach Marcello Lippi said: "We worked hard for three years to bring ourselves up to this level and I think every player in the team deserves credit for this championship."

Shearer named in Europe's best

ALAN SHEARER is among the runners to become European Footballer of the Year but Paul Gascoigne has been omitted from the shortlist of 50 named in the soccer magazine France Football.

American Football

Basketball

Chess

Joe Hockey

Snooker

Fixtures

Snooker

Basketball

SportsGuardian

Wales put their faith in Davies

David Plummer on the former captain's return eight years on

WALES have asked Jonathan Davies to fire their back line again, eight years after he won the last of his 27 caps, and at 34 he will be the oldest post-war outside-half to play in the red jersey. His last international was under his captaincy, Wales became the first of the home countries to lose at home to an emerging nation, Romania, in a full Test. Recriminations followed and Davies joined the exodus of Welsh players north. But on Sunday he faces Australia at the National Stadium, where five years ago he was banned from being interviewed on the pitch because he was a rugby league professional. He is one of three changes made by Wales after their streaky victory over

Italy in Rome last month. Neil Jenkins has been deposited at outside-half as Kevin Bowring seeks a more adventurous approach. "We need game-controllers and decision-makers," said the coach, who saw Davies excel for Wales in last weekend's Dubai Sevens. "Jonathan has the knack of doing the right thing at the right time, as his performances during Cardiff's European Cup run have shown. He offers both experience and expertise." Despite his wealth of caps, Jenkins has struggled to get his line moving. Beaten packs have not helped, nor has his tendency to stand still when receiving a pass. Davies may not have the pace of yore but his reading of the game and his ability to bring the best out of those around him make him formidable.

"There is a danger people will expect too much," he said. "I am not the same player as when I left. I have improved in some aspects and am weaker in others." When Davies returned to Welsh rugby 13 months ago he received a rapturous homecoming but failed to break into the Cardiff team at outside-half, and struggled with injury while his wife Karen battled against cancer. "I did think of quitting at the end of last season," he said, "but this season has been different."

If Davies recaptures old glories, a tour to South Africa with the Lions, the one honour in the game which has eluded him, will beckon.

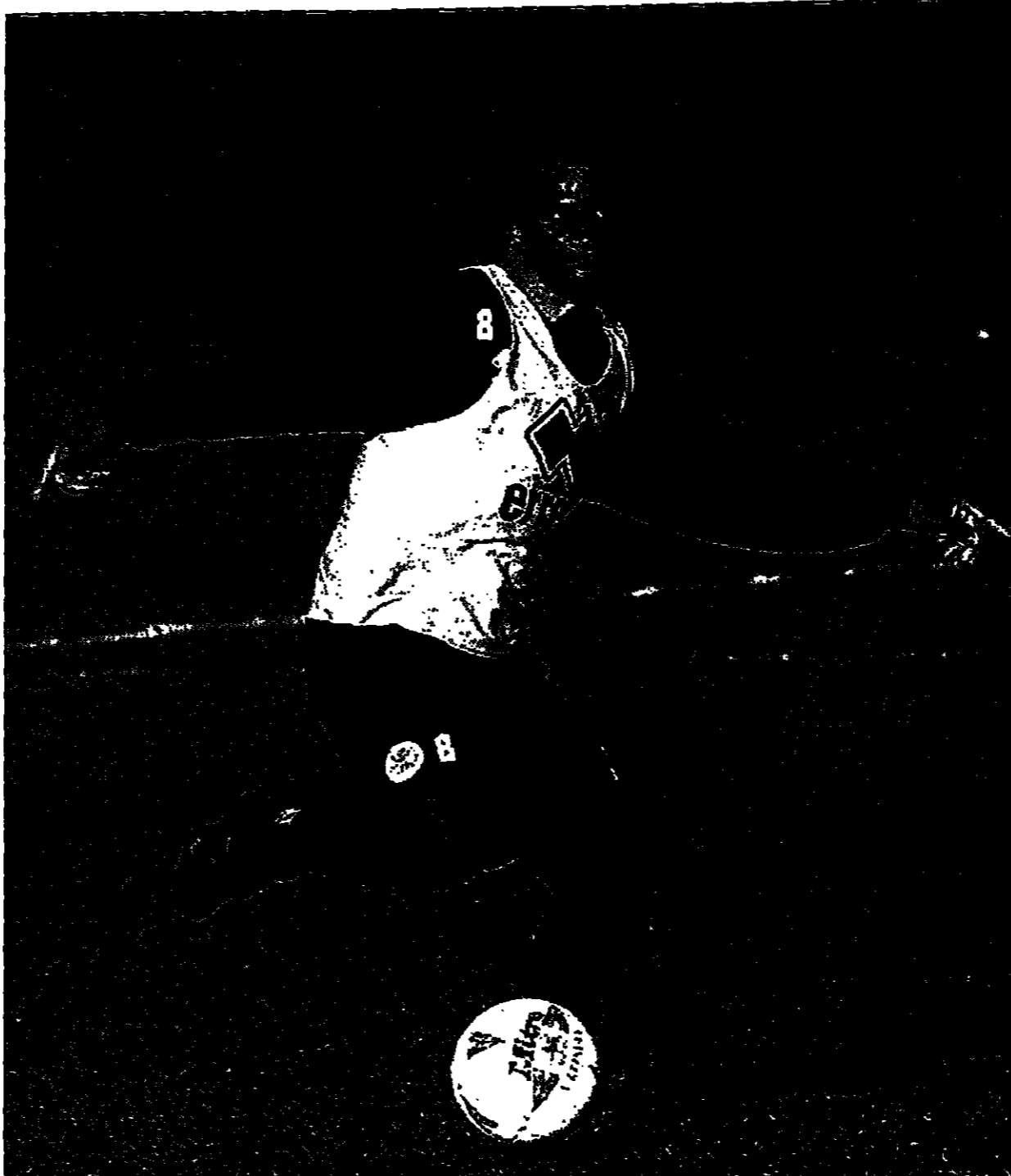
David Young, another former rugby league international, is also recalled, six years after his last union game for Wales, and the fit-again Ieuan Evans reclaims his place on the right wing.

WALERS W Premier: I Evans (both lineups), G Thomas (Ridgehead), S Gabe (Swansea), D James (Bridgend), J Davies, R Howley (both Cardiff); C Lewis (Swansea), J Hughes (Newport), D Young (both Cardiff), G Lewis (Swansea), D James, M Taylor (both Cardiff), S Williams (Newport), K Jones (Ospreys), R Howley (both Cardiff), P Jones (both Newport), C Charles (Swansea), C Gwynn (Richmond), I Howley (Cardiff), G Jenkins (Swansea).



Davies... adventurous

SOCCER



Everything fine... Emerson shows no signs of his latest brush with Middlesbrough's manager Bryan Robson yesterday

Michael Walker on more problems for Emerson before tonight's North-east derby

Robson fines then picks his stay-away prodigal

AFTER three weeks of what seems like continually disruptive behaviour, you would think Bryan Robson would be tired of his strong-willed Brazilian Emerson. And yet

the Middlesbrough manager, though having his patience pushed to the limits, insists that Emerson will play in tonight's fourth-round Coca-Cola Cup tie against Newcastle at the Riverside Stadium.

Emerson's latest indiscretion has at least seen him incur a fine from Robson. The Brazilian, who was suspended for last weekend's draw with Manchester United, turned up a day late for training having been given permission to travel to Portugal. "Emerson is a top-quality player but he is not bigger than the club," Robson said. "He will be fined."

But Robson was also adamant that Emerson deserved a place in the Boro midfield. "I'm sure Emerson will be focused on the game," he said. "I don't think there is a problem over that and I'm convinced the fans will give him a tremendous reception."

Fabrizio Ravanelli became Robson's most significant worry yesterday when he reported sick with a stomach bug. But the manager hopes the Italian will recover in time to face Alan Shearer. Middlesbrough have gone five games without a win — the same number of matches in which Shearer has scored consecutively. If he does so again tonight he will equal his personal record.

Liverpool, having been hooded of Anfield for the first time in the Roy Evans era, will be trying to end their slight stutter in form, although it will be far from easy against a rejuvenated Arsenal. A Dennis Bergkamp thigh strain is the Gunners' only worry though Arsene Wenger has no doubt about the ability of Bergkamp's replacement, John Hartson. "He has the power and

strength to become a first-class striker and would be a good replacement." John Lukic continues in goal as a replacement for England's David Seaman, who is out for three weeks with damaged ribs.

Evans's problem is an embarrassment of riches. He must decide which four to choose from Barnes, Redknapp, Thomas, Collymore, Berger, and McManaman if fit.

A man for whom decision-making comes naturally is Alex Ferguson, and once again youth gets the call above experience for Manchester United's visit to Leicester. Peter Schmeichel and Eric Cantona will sit out the game but John O'Keane, Ben Thornley and Michael Clegg keep the positions in which they did so well on Saturday at Middlesbrough.

Gary Pallister, however, is a player with his youth behind him and must be concerned about how much football there is in the future. His long-term back injury was not helped by a car accident this week and the centre-half has been told by Ferguson that he must prove his fitness at Filbert Street or at Old Trafford at the weekend to stand any chance of making the trip to Vienna next Monday.

Tottenham will not relish a trip to the First Division leaders Bolton, who two years ago reached Wembley in this competition. With Pe Franks back after a three-match absence with a groin injury, and his fellow Dane Michael Johansen and new signing Jamie Pollock in the frame, Bolton's manager Colin Todd has eight men challenging for four midfield places. Todd played down suggestions that the club were still

interested in Chelsea's Mark Hughes. "When I spoke to Chelsea four or five months ago the timing was right. It's not right now and Chelsea say they won't let him go anyway. I've got targets elsewhere." Meanwhile Tottenham are hoping their Danish midfielder Allan Nielsen recovers from the knee injury sustained in Sunday's 3-1 defeat at Arsenal.

Last night's soccer, page 15

United we sit but lost in the crowd



Jim White

IN THE film *Charlie Bubbles*, a classic Sixties yarn about a northern lad made good, our hero, played by Albert Finney, goes home to a football match. Feted as a celebrity, he is offered the chance to watch the game from a box at Old Trafford, Manchester United being so far ahead in the football market that they were offering executive seating arrangements way back when most other clubs considered a cinder bank the height of luxury. But sitting there, enclosed, watching the lads swaying on the terraces below him, Finney feels increasingly uncomfortable. Eventually he has to leg it outside. Indeed, so odious is the experience, so corrupt, so treacherous, so symbolic of the distance he has travelled from his roots, he is driven to throw up.

Last week I was invited to watch a game at Old Trafford from an executive box for the first time and I found myself similarly overcome with a sense of nausea. Although in my case it was brought on by a surfeit of Coronation Chicken starter. It was a timely invitation, however. Before United's game with Juventus, Alex Ferguson made pertinent comments about some of the crowd at Old Trafford, about how they were turning up for a day trip, enjoying the magnificent facilities, sitting back and expecting to be entertained, a new constituency unaware of their part of the spectating bargain, unschooled in the need to generate an encouraging atmosphere. It was not doing the players any favours, he said, trying to recover their form and spirit in a silent stadium.

Many United supporters had been alarmed for some time about the decline of the noise at Old Trafford. The reasons were many: unsympathetic stewarding, a stadium DJ whose idea of pre-match atmosphere-building is playing Queen's We Are The Champions, and the fact that local youths — traditionally the most vocal element in a football gathering — find themselves squeezed out in favour of those more likely to spend heavily in the bars,

cafes and shops where football's money is spun these days. But the most fundamental reason is architectural. The welcome improvements brought about by modernisation have altered the entire manner in which a crowd behaves. On terraces, choirs could rise, those interested in joining in could gravitate towards them, those wishing to avoid them move away. In seats, people not only feel less physically connected, they are rooted to the spot: when someone stands up to shout, sing or wave a flag, he immediately spots someone else's view. It was no coincidence, incidentally, that for several years the Old Trafford DJ's other pre-match song was James Sir Down. The executive box is the apex of non-participatory spectating. The deal seems to be that what you gain in luxury — central heating, the pitch laid out like a table-cloth in front of you, no need to queue for your half-time curps — you lose in contact. You might as well watch on television; as indeed you can do, a monitor at the back of the box offering slo-mo replays and Ron Atkinson opinions. As with most things, however, it depends on the company you keep. The box I found myself in was filled with the passionate, the excited, those who had thoroughly appreciated the hospitality. There was yelling, there was chanting, there was even a man with a cornet offering brass renditions of La Marseillaise and that Verté march the Dutch fans so enjoy.

THROUGHOUT the 90 minutes, this box was a hot-spot of passion, encouragement, atmosphere. Oddly, though, so hermetically sealed are the Old Trafford executive boxes (they come complete with a volume switch to enable crowd-noise levels to be controlled electronically), no one outside could hear. As the corner player blasted his stonk stuff, and the chanting grew more raucous with every bottle of Manchester United vintage claret, it became clear that this was probably the first recorded instance of a reversal of the usual rule: the sensitive souls in the cheap seats were being protected from the unruly unwashed in the boxes.

But I led to an unlikely thought: if Alex Ferguson really wants to improve the atmosphere at his ground, he should encourage the stadium architects to fit the boxes with windows that actually open. And thus stop all that noise going to waste.

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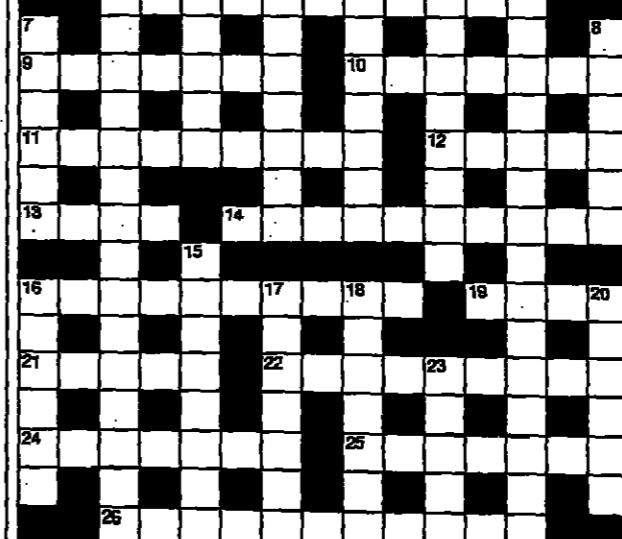
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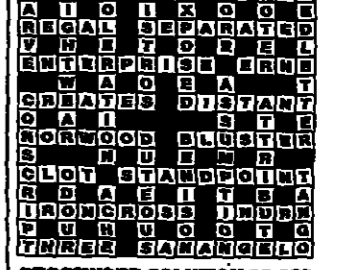
G2 page 8

Guardian Crossword No 20,821

Set by Araucaria



- Across**
- Mr. Mop, shaggy, dishevelled, to beat record? (11)
 - London palace of 1 down's 19 (7)
 - Some hair specialists with some ornament for a hat (7)
 - Haggler who wins another medal like the first? (9)
 - I am a carrier and am taking everything back (5)
 - Romance pursued by female willingly (4)
 - 1 down's badly grazed and sore from something sharp (5,1,4)
 - Little beast, about one of five, in drapery (10)
 - Queen Elizabeth the first? (4)
 - Old blast by jolly good fellow (5)
 - Big story about saint at jewel of a church (9)
- Down**
- Empty with silencer (7)
 - Request to an establishment gets a funny look (7)
 - In unobtrusive energy, sailors and soldiers are as we like these days (8,5)
 - 24 Empty with silencer (7)
 - 25 Request to an establishment gets a funny look (7)
 - 26 In unobtrusive energy, sailors and soldiers are as we like these days (8,5)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,821

- Advance theory supporting steering? (8)
 - Character from a short story by 1 down (5)
 - Knight no longer errant yet in Queen Street? (7)
 - Uranium extracted from thallium could be phoney (7)
 - According to Wordsworth our birth is dead (5)
 - 23, 8 Mud on shoe, English work of 1 down (5,3,5)
- Solution tomorrow**
- 27** Quack? Then call our solutions line on 0800 1 333 333. Calls cost 50p per minute Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm, and 45p per minute at all other times. Supply supported by ADS.
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